

SPY

May 1992 Volume 6 Number 7

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LOSER



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NEVER AGAIN: A JERRY LEWIS STORY

► The idea of Jerry Lewis's directing and starring in *the* definitive Holocaust movie seems absurd, grotesque, beyond comprehension. And according to those few who've actually seen *The Day the Clown Cried*, the never-released film is indeed all those things—and much, much more. BRUCE HANDY compiled an oral history 40

TOO RICH AND TOO THIN-SKINNED

► If the American yardstick for social grace is money, then how do the rich and famous—like the Bases (meat-rendering), the Annenbergs (bookie services) and even Dana Delany (toilet-flusher valves)—explain the source of their (and their forebears') outré wealth? Why, euphemistically, of course. GREG CERIO rattles the financial skeletons of America's aristocracy 50

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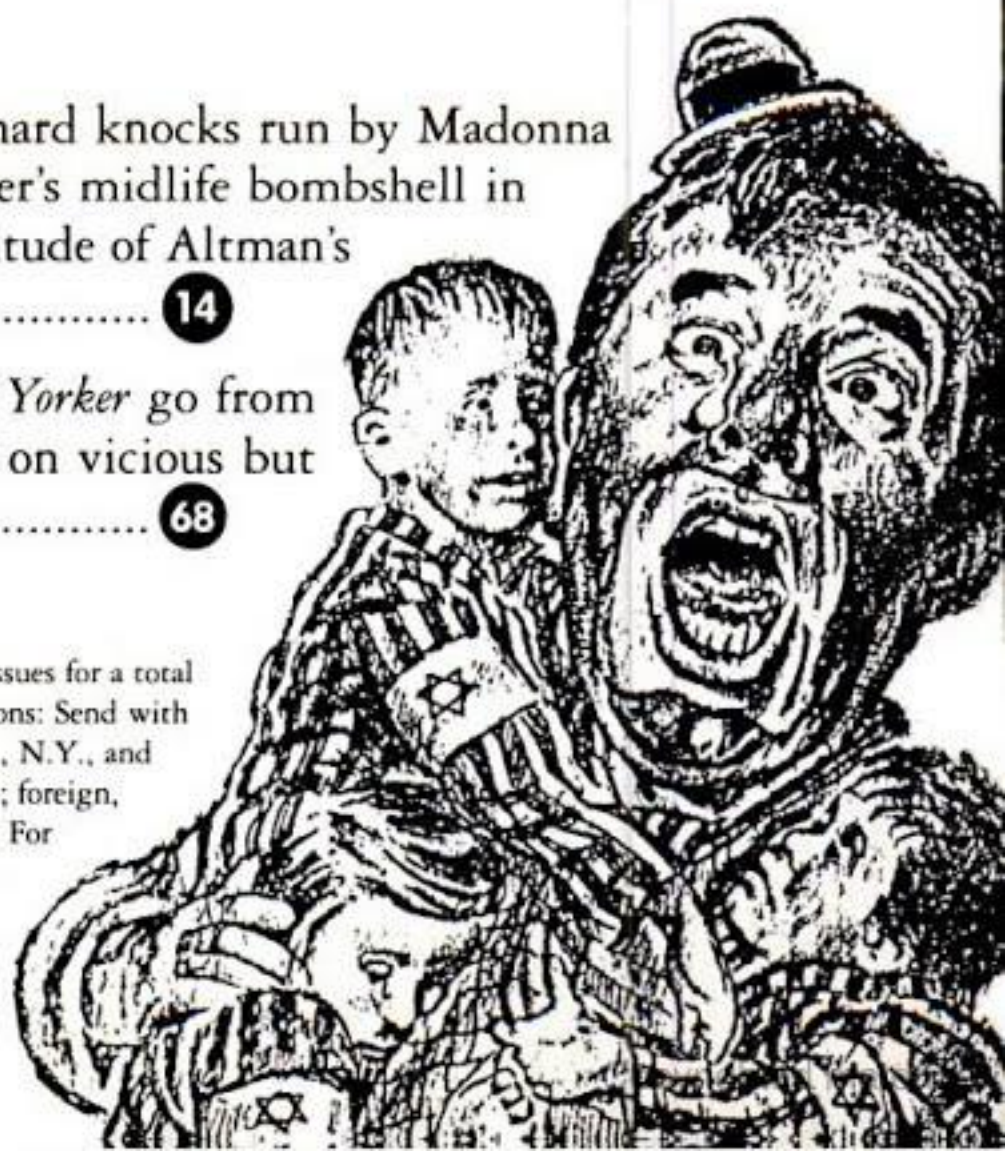
► British-born *Vanity Fair* editrix Tina Brown has turned the once-failing literary magazine with a glamorous sheen into a successful glamour magazine with a literary sheen, an eighties artifact that still sells pretty well in the nineties. But as GEOFFREY STOKES concludes, the jury's still out on Brown's most ambitious work in progress: herself. *Private Eye* founding editor RICHARD INGRAMS remembers Tina's early days. Bonus board game: Play Chutes and Ladders, the Tina way! 56

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► FRED GOODMAN on the school of hard knocks run by Madonna in **Music**; LAUREN HOBBS surveys the fallout from Barry Diller's midlife bombshell in **The Webs**; and CELIA BRADY on the uncanny **Industry** verisimilitude of Altman's *The Player* 14

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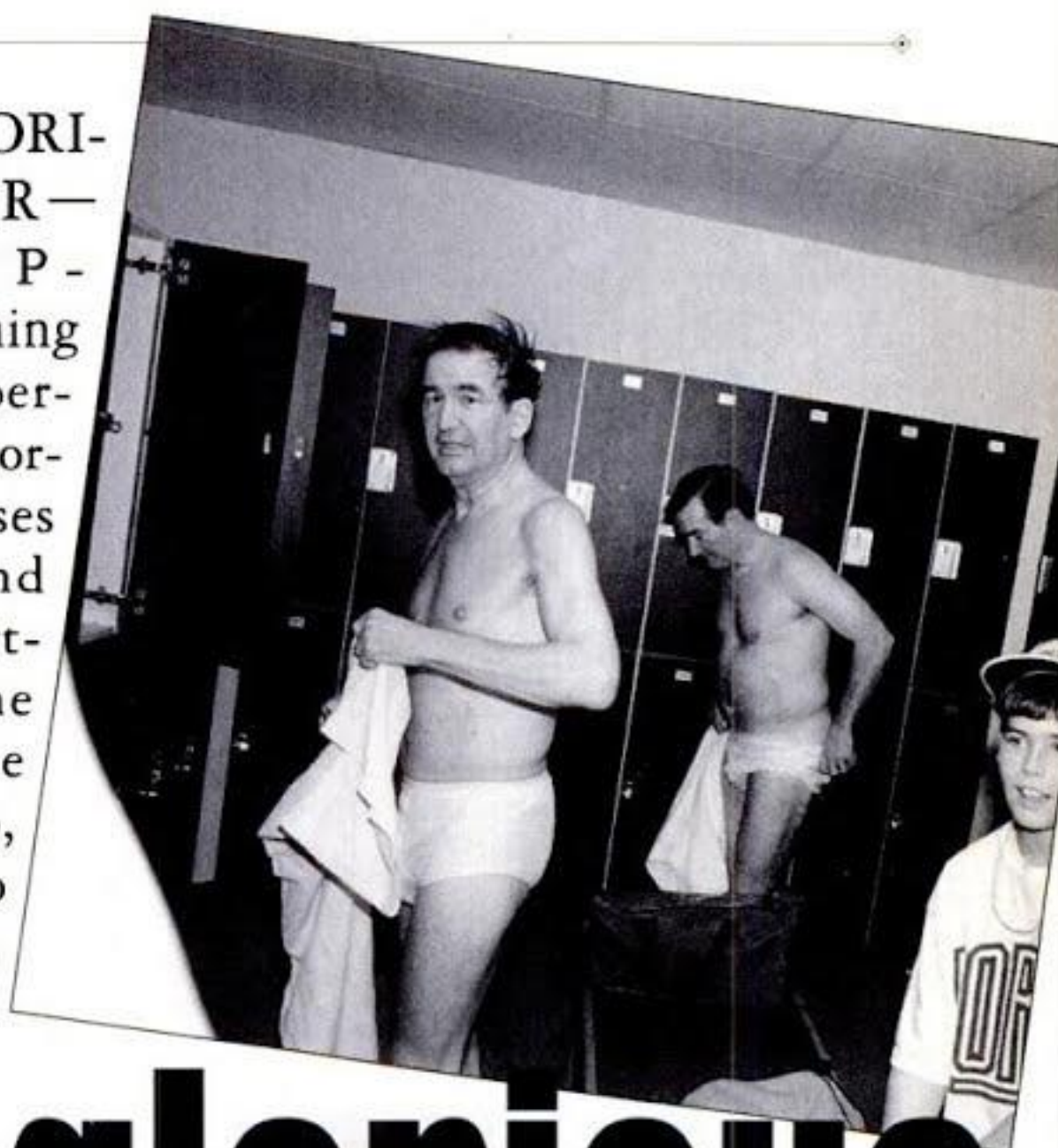
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Great Expectations

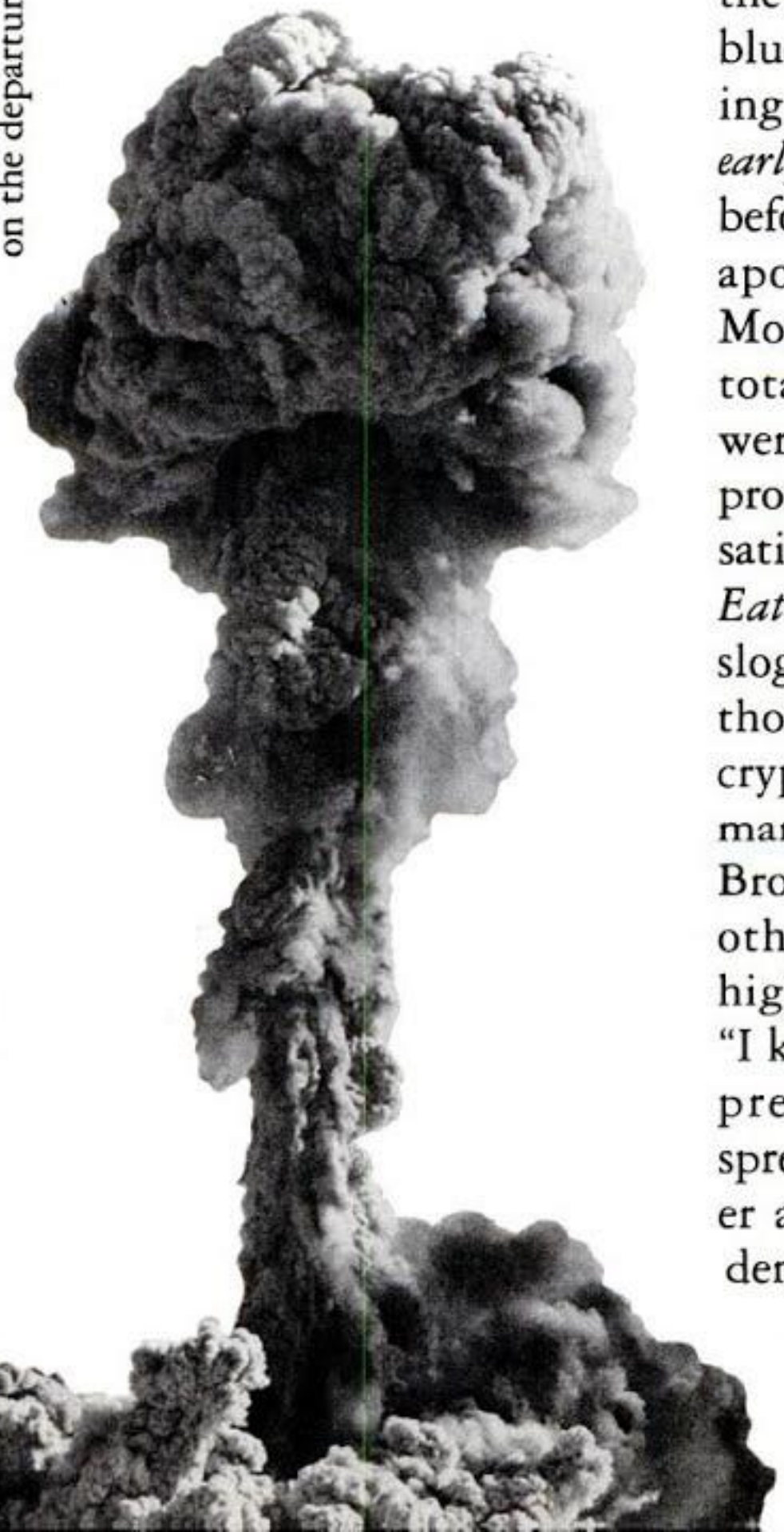
—Fox chairman Rupert Murdoch
Barry Diller, his CEO

MAY MAY BE GLORIOUS THIS YEAR—NOT JUST UP-country freshets turning meadows soft and perfumy, not just the normal seasonal increases in gin gimlets and sporty green convertibles, not even the happy disappearance of Paul Tsongas. No, this could turn out to be the first true spring of the 1990s,



May may be glorious

"I read today that Barry was the last gasp of morality here. That's liberal bullshit." on the departure of



the first May in three years that the blossoming forsythia and blue, blue sky aren't grotesquely at odds with a grim, withering economy. Maybe the confusion and anxiety and guilt of *early* spring were simply recession's grand finale, the darkness before the dawn. Or maybe it was the darkness before the apocalypse. On Mayday our thoughts turn naturally to Moscow, and in Moscow this year there was a bring-back-totalitarianism demonstration. Among the Stalinist mobs were a knot of youngsters in black leather jackets. These self-proclaimed anarchists (even in an anarchy the anarchists aren't satisfied) hopped and chanted the phrase, "*Eat gaseous worms! Eat gaseous worms!*" According to *The New York Times*, "The slogan stirred considerable commotion." Back here, even though organized groups never scream cryptic dada chants, the New York primary was highly entertaining. Jerry Brown, precisely complementary to the other major Democratic also-ran (his high-pitched dumbbell demagoguery—"I know I'm shrill," he says—is just as depressing as Tsongas's limp-dicked spreadsheet rationality), stitched together a singular new coalition: college students, factory workers, residents of Colorado and Maine...in other words, *people who never wear ties*. Yet just as



Great Expectations

Tsongas deluded himself for weeks that bad news for Clinton would be good news for him, Brown's strategic mistake may have been in assuming that *anti-necktie* feeling translates automatically into *pro-turtleneck* sentiment. "Turtlenecks," said Tennessee Democratic official Richard Chesteen, "don't go over big around here." Brown, however, is in the race to stay, no matter how tough it gets: He is a man, after all, who wore penitential chicken-wire underpants as a Jesuit seminarian.

Pat Buchanan is a charismatic Catholic loser, too, but at least we now have current, unequivocal proof—this month's unretouched cover photograph—that his undergarments are ordinary elastic and cotton, and without any apparent religious significance. Unfortunately, the David Duke candidacy faded away before any amusingly underdressed photographs of him could surface. But, like Mussolini with Hitler 50 years ago, the pioneering

Duke had already recognized Buchanan as kin, and deferred to the northerner's greater political power. "I think Pat Buchanan sounds a lot like me," said the former Klansman. "I'm glad to see it. I think Pat Buchanan sounds more like me every day."

Even though Buchanan has retreated into larval mode, running against foreigners and nonwhite people instead of against George Bush, the president's people have remained scared of him, reluctant to make any peace overtures. "He'd slap our hand and go on national TV and make fun of us," said Fred Malek, Bush's campaign manager, sounding more like a 12-year-old girl than a presidential political operative ought to. But brattishness seems to be a Bush-administration theme: Goody-two-shoes Jerry Lewis nearly managed to get the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission chairman fired for criticizing the *Telethon*. "If ever there was a 'Point of Light,'" Jerry wrote

to the president, "I'm it!" Points of light—are those what the Russians call *gaseous worms*?

The Japanese have built their superior economy by taking American products and manufacturing them better. Now they have taken the American president's own name and manufactured apt new words: *Bushusuru* and *Bushushita* are now Japanese verbs meaning "to vomit."

Kenner is not marketing a plastic creature called Bushushita—yet. They do, however, have a line of toys called Savage Mondo Blitzers, plastic creatures named, among other things, Snot Shot, Projectile Vomit and Barf Bucket. After some complaints from parents, Kenner decided to rename a few of the Savage Mondo Blitzers—although they refused to tell us which ones. "We're not looking to capitalize on any more hype at this point," said a Kenner spokeswoman named Krickett Neumann. Is Gaseous Worm in the running? She didn't say.

Here's an idea for a toy: "You

If we are
what we eat,
why does everyone
love a weenie roast?

should draw a mushroom cloud and put underneath it, 'Made in America by lazy and illiterate Americans and tested in Japan,'" Senator Fritz Hollings said recently. Fun-ny. A Japanese-foreign-ministry spokesman was stereotypically discreet and elliptical in response. "One could comment on the taste of it," he said.

There have been scattered outbreaks of understatement in America as well. Alan Simpson, the Republican senator from Wyoming, managed to be understated and crotchety in a single sentence. He was asked, apropos the resignation of sexual harasser and senator Brock Adams, about press scrutiny of senators' personal lives. "I didn't come out here," Simpson said, "to be called a crook and a bum and an uncaring idiot."

An uncaring idiot? Not Gay Talese, the author of extremely big books, who, unlike Brock Adams, freely admits his past adulteries to reporters. "I love my wife," he told

People in the course of publicizing his newest work. "It is a very physical relationship," he added voluntarily. "Very physical. And often. *This very day!*"

Brock, Gay...and Bryant. Bryant Gumbel has a new haircut, a quasi fade, and it seemed to make NBC a little panicky. "*It's nothing radical,*" insisted a network spokeswoman, at pains to calm America's fears. "Just slightly more angular—but still in the conservative anchor style."

TV people are so high-strung. Who, besides her William Morris agent, really believes that a syndicated talk show hosted by Ivana Trump is a good idea? Why does Erin Moran, the woman who played Ron Howard's little sister on *Happy Days*, now say that Howard and every other member of the *Happy Days* cast is "evil"? (Anson Williams, maybe—but Henry Winkler?) She added, "I pray for them." *Eureka!* That's it! The last line of the verse thing we've been working on all month....

Eat Gaseous Worms

I. "Hiroshima Haiku"

*Boom! Eat gaseous worms;
We eat California rolls,
They own our country.*

II. "Election '92"

Nothing radical, still in the conservative anchor style. (Turtlenecks don't go over big around here.)

He'd go on national TV and make fun of us: *Bushusuru, Bushushita, Snot Shot, Projectile Vomit, Barf Bucket, Krickett Neumann.*

One could comment on the taste. I didn't come out here to be called a crook and a bum and an uncaring idiot.

I know I'm shrill.

I think Pat Buchanan sounds more like me every day.

I'm glad to see it.

I love my wife. (It is a very physical relationship. *Very physical. And often.*)

If ever there was a Point of Light, I'm it.

I pray for them. ☽



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From the SPY Mailroom



This month's column is devoted to demographics, because readers—or, anyway, E. Loraine Lawson of Taylorsville, Kentucky—want it that way: “According to your reader demographics, whom is SPY attracting? Is it a mixture, drawing literates of all ages?” *Literates* sounds right, E. Loraine, if your impressive use of the objective *whom* rather than the tempting but incorrect subjective *who* is any indication. But that isn't the half of it, as a random sample of SPY readers—those from whom we have recently received letters—reveals:

(1) *SPY readers are members of the international set.* In this space in February, Timothy Bowen informed us that the correct rendering of Le Boozé Bar (“America Le Beautiful,” by Harry Shearer, October) would be La Boozé. Now Diana Rhudick of Somerville, Massachusetts, and Gregory Nowak of Princeton have both offered more idiomatic corrections of Timothy's correction. Rhudick, no doubt puffing a Gauloise, calls for a return to Le Boozé Bar, while M. Nowak insists upon Le Bar Boozé. Thankfully, our readership does not seem to include any actual French people.

(2) *SPY readers are poets at heart.* Jack O. Malley of Boca Raton sends us a nine-verse “meditative limerick,” “Drifter With a Horn”: “He played on green lawns/for kids and a clown/ Even some dogs astray/ And ladies with a cookie tray.” Not a limerick in the strictest sense, but it's the imagery that counts—the imagery and the promise of “Permission for reprints available FREE.”

(3) *SPY readers are aware of the Pynchonian interconnectedness of all things in our modern lives.* Rick Ackerman of San Francisco warns of a “sinister conspiracy: the elevation of Mary Hart's legs into the canon ▶

Letters to SPY

Spin Doktor

Edward van Kloberg was perhaps more of a creep than you realized [“Publicists of the Damned,” by Art Levine, February]. You quote him referring to “greater Germany.” This phrase is straight out of Nazi ideology. According to the concept of “Grosse Deutschland,” all people of German blood were to be united (“Ein Reich, Ein Volk, Ein Führer”)—justifying the invasion of Poland, the Austrian Anschluss and the annexation of the Sudetenland. Van Kloberg's pithy reference was at the very least wonderful salesmanship.

Congratulations—excellent piece.

Marshall Brown

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Ein, Zwei, Die

I enjoyed Mary Billard's “Break a Leg,” about Henry Hill [February]; it was right on target. Having spent more than 15 years as a made member, I believe I am a good judge as to the accuracy of mob-related stories.

Michael Franzese

Littleton, Colorado

You enjoyed the story? Do we amuse you? Are we clowns? Well, thanks.

Down Gemeinschaft

Your essay “American Gothic: Welcome to the New Dark Ages” [by John Brodie, February] hit home like a mace—both pointed and swinging. Have halberd, will travel....

Dawn Bradley

Chicago, Illinois

John Brodie missed one medieval characteristic that has returned to the land: midwifery, down to its pronunciation, reeking of Beowulf's English.

Linda Odom

Chicago, Illinois

Thumbs up to Brodie for his biting piece. Chris Whittle, a featured “nobleman,” is near and dear to my heart, since I am a student being subjected to the slick shallowness of Whittle Communications's vapid news program. This throwback to feudalism has developed the perfect Orwellian nightmare as a means to possess the minds of America's youth—Channel One is simply a clever vehicle to suppress the vassals.

Tracy McCormick

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

I strongly object to your portrayal of Chris Whittle as an ambitious, heartless medieval count. The gruel he provides us is always warm, the hay for our cots is relatively fresh and insect-free, and our hours allow us a somewhat good night's sleep.

James Moody

Metropulse magazine

Knoxville, Tennessee

While the Heritage Foundation certainly has benefited from the generosity of the Coors family, Brodie is tapping the wrong keg when he claims we've “advocated the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* and the restriction of the availability of divorce.” I thought the name was SPY, not Lie.

Herb B. Berkowitz

Vice president, the Heritage Foundation

Washington, D.C.

John Brodie replies, “The source for my assertion was Issues '88: A Platform for America, published jointly by the Free Congress Foundation and Heritage. Volume III, admittedly copyrighted by FCF alone, includes Planks 198 (“Abolish ‘no-fault’ divorce”) and 222 (“Undo Roe vs. Wade”). The three volumes are distributed together as a boxed set and share an editor, and nowhere is there a disclaimer stating that the opinions of Heritage are not those of FCF or vice versa.” ➤

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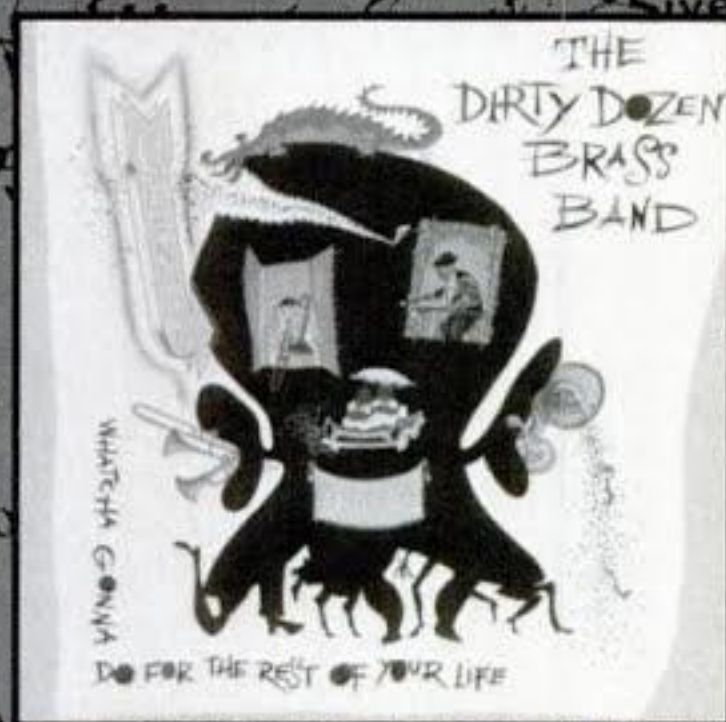
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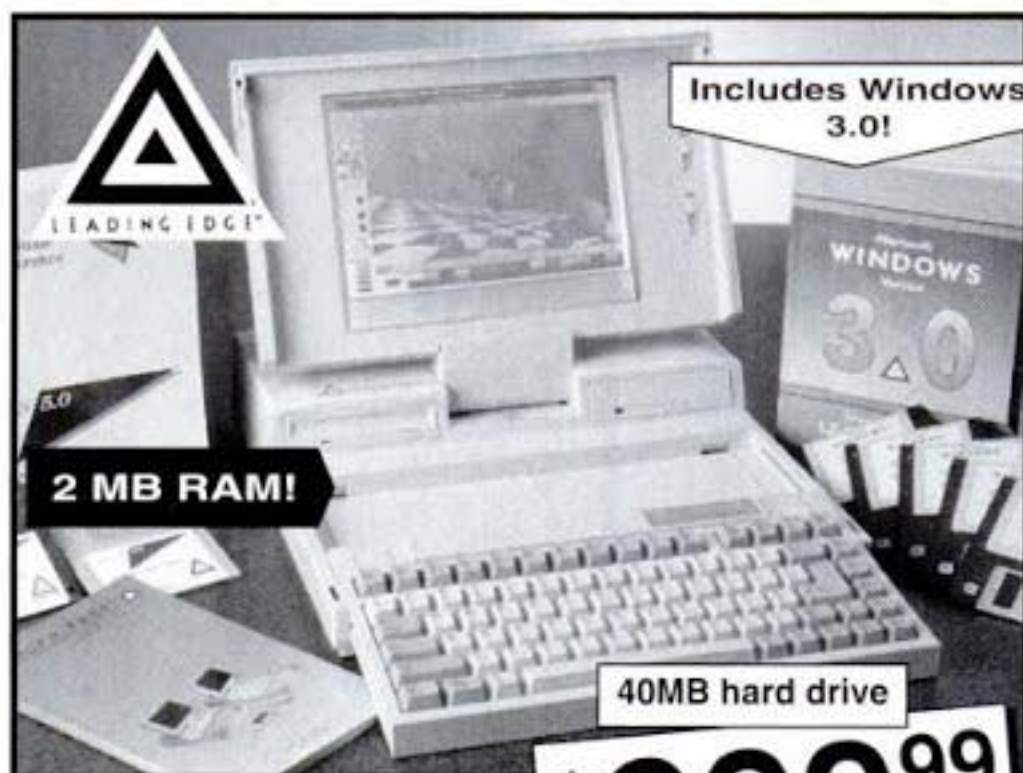
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of popular iconography," and Bruce Lang of Johannesburg is worried that the "international conspiracy" behind Mel Mandell's rise to editor of *SPY* (see this space, February) is responsible for the name MR A SEERY on his *SPY* mailing label. (By the way, the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, which opened the whole Mel Mandell can of worms, recently called to apologize for having us on their mailing list; they hoped we wouldn't mention the Society of Manufacturing Engineers in the Mailroom column or anywhere else.) And then there's the 25-page "major mailing" from T. L. Ness in Whittier, California. T.L. appears to be offering evidence that the Pentagon and the Kremlin conspired to steal his plans for the Omega Matrix/Airship system, a combination airborne military laser and public-transportation vehicle. (So much for the fare-beater problem.) T.L. also holds forth on high taxes, toll roads and the fact that "my wild backyard tomato plants of late October might have delivered unseasonable fruit by now, if I had not

destroyed them." To avoid unlawful imprisonment, T.L. writes, "I keep all my mailing documents and notarize/reg mail whatever I may need to defend myself against their tricks." His letter to *SPY* came certified mail. T.L.: We are not—repeat, *not*—in on it.

(4) *SPY* readers are grooming-product entrepreneurs. Perry Tejero of Perry's International, Honolulu, introduces us to his revolutionary dye, Darkhair: "It never stain [*sic*] yet it darkens the greying hair and makes you look younger. Don't worry with white clothes, pillows and blankets, they won't get stained." Mr. Tejero believes this will be of "great interest" to our readers, despite his noticeable lack of effort to appeal to the literates.

(5) *SPY* readers are globe-trotters. "Joseph and Sarah" of Bloomington are planning a cross-country trip and want to know where to find "freak show type stuff...crime and mayhem scenes...Satanic spots, and so forth." We here on Union Square West travel to get away from that. And C. Buch of Manhattan sends two souvenirs ►

Danke Schoen

Thank you for the superb "What Does Wayne Newton Mean?" [by Lisa Birnbach, February]. We are prejudiced when it comes to Wayne, because, you see, we are Wayniacs. Wayne never fails to recognize his fans at a concert. He is always giving, caring and truly renowned as Mr. Entertainer to us. Our hats are off to you for giving him the support he so richly deserves.

Donna Eales, state coordinator
Wayne Newton International
Fan Club
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

At last! An in-depth glimpse into the life and emotions of one terrific man. You have reinforced my loyalty to the only magazine I subscribe to.

Sherry Train
Atlanta, Georgia

Birnbach writes that "Wayne micro-manages his daughter's life...." Does she have children? The meddling activities she has ascribed to Newton



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from her recent trip to Bangkok: a photo of an advertisement for Spy wine cooler and, less explicably, a lovely reproduction of a watercolor duck. C. writes in her accompanying note, "I should know better than to sign my name to a letter to SPY." *I should know better:* This certainly says something about our readership.

If we know E. Loraine Lawson, she expects a little more demographic rigor than we've provided, so we hired Mediamark Research Inc. (MRI) to conduct a more legitimate survey of our readers. Their findings: SPY readers have a median age of 33.3, a median household income of \$57,800 and no excuse for being anything but literate, since 93 percent have attended college, 69 percent have graduated, and 25 percent hold graduate degrees. During the last year, 67 percent of them have bought rock 'n' roll records and 52 percent classical records. And while more drive Hondas than any other car, MRI says SPY readers are five or six or seven times as likely as typical magazine-reading Americans to own Jaguars and Mercedeses. (The editors, incidentally, drive Omega Matrix/Airships.)

Finally, Anita Phelps (Washington, D.C.) and Keith P. Bly (Cleveland) write jointly to ask about Paula Abdul—specifically, "Who *is* her audience, anyway?" This, of course, will be the topic of next month's column. ☺

Photographs Wanted

SPY is accepting submissions for a new Photos to the Editor section. Amusing, amazing, revealing, intriguing and otherwise appropriate photographs are welcome. (All material submitted becomes the property of SPY Corporation, and may be published by SPY in any form. SPY is not responsible for lost or damaged prints or transparencies.) Send all photos, with any necessary explanatory text, to Photos to the Editor, SPY, The SPY Building, 5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003. ☺

are referred to by most of us yokels as "parenting."

Kathleen M. Kiely
Winter Park, Florida

Yokels call it parenting? And Pellegrino water comes from Appalachia?

Alles in Der Family

The Industry column on Hollywood nepotism [February] showed me that there is a God, and Celia Brady is His messenger. In 1986 I was a (very) low-paid intern at Paramount, working for the newly hired then-director of corporate communications, Deborah Rosen. She was "widely despised and mistrusted" even then; it never failed to amaze me that she managed to hang on for so long.

Alison Ashton
San Diego, California

Other Voices, Other Letters

I am concerned by Clinton spokesman Richard Mintz's comment on SPY's readership, "not the type of audience we want to associate with the campaign" ["President Garbo," by Michael Hainey, February]. Thank God I exercise my right to vote!

Earl Robert Pennell III
Cortland, Ohio

As a Catholic, I will not read a magazine that mocks the most sacred part of my faith as "mythical" and "nutty" ["Little Miss Dangerous," by John Lombardi, October]—and I will convey this thought to certain of your advertisers. Have you no decency?

James Schreier
Associate Judge, Circuit Court
of Cook County
Chicago, Illinois

Do we have decency? Is the pope Catholic? (The last time we heard your question, by the way, was back in the 1950s, from someone defending freedom of expression against a nutty midwesterner.)

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Life Imitates Art—Specifically, Altman's *The Player*

Hollywood has always loved pictures about Hollywood (and in the case of *A Star Is Born*, remaking pictures about Hollywood). However, around Beverly Hills and Bel-Air the advance word about Robert Altman's new film, *The Player*, has been willfully restrained, even though it is a movie about the movies, and even though it is brilliant and funny and cost a mere \$8-million to make despite dozens of star cameos. (Also, there's a likable, omniscient character named Celia.) So what's not to like? Possibly the problem is that *The Player* is not only a back-lot story and a surefire money-maker but breathtakingly accurate as well.

Certain private-screening-room denizens have tried to display a superior, knowing mischievousness by claiming that they *love this movie*, but there is also plenty of studious dismissal. Mark Canton, the extremely silly chairman of Columbia, started watching *The Player* on the Sony lot but told his projectionist to skip to the sixth reel so he could see the end—and thus pretend to have fulfilled his promise to ICM's Jeff Berg and Avenue Pictures's Cary Brokaw that he would watch the film. Apparently, he had not promised to watch *all* of it. Nevertheless, Canton has been happy to pooh-pooh *The Player*. Altman calls him a "liar," a "jerk," and an "asshole." One young screenwriter and director, a client of Hollywood mega-lawyer Jake Bloom, summed up the establishment's blasé take on *The Player* when he called it "irrelevant. The eastern media like it because it makes them feel savvy and inside."

Irrelevant? *Eastern media*? Consider these recent incidents of life imitating satire:

1. *Dramatic faxes*: The faxing of witty-cum-menacing messages to the movie executive played by Tim Robbins is a key device in *The Player*. When—in real life—Barry Diller decided to leave Fox, he composed faxes to his fellow players and sent them on just ahead of his official announcement. At Paramount,

Brandon Tartikoff received a message from Diller of which the gist was, *Congratulations on Wayne's World. I knew you'd be great at this sort of thing. That's why I'm leaving the business.* Cheerful and sporting enough, it would seem, but one wonders if this ostensible pat on the back wasn't actually a sly, bitchy dig: If this is what makes a hit nowadays, I want out.

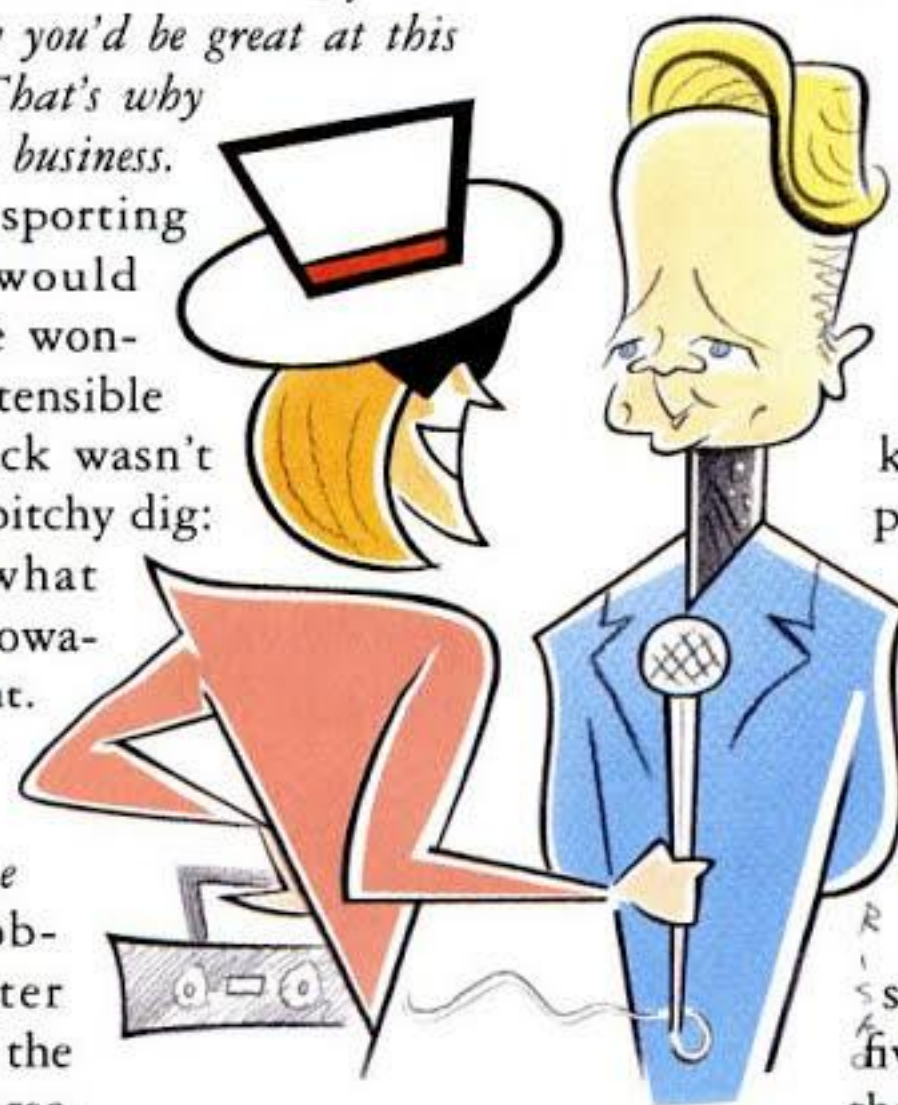
2. *Improbable eleventh-hour executive salvation*: Robbins's character spends most of the movie on the precipice of unemployment. He is miraculously saved, though, when he produces an unexpected hit—in fact, not only is he saved, but he becomes head of the studio. Up on the 42nd floor of the Paramount building in New York last fall, Marty Davis, the chairman of Paramount Communications, screamed at the president of Paramount, Stanley Jaffe, about an interview Tartikoff had given shortly after his arrival in which he had implicitly in-

sulted Paramount's films. Davis also screamed at Jaffe about Tartikoff's failure to fire pointless studio executives Gary Lucchesi and David Kirkpatrick. Jaffe, in turn, screamed at Tartikoff, and Tartikoff promptly demoted the two to independent-producerdom. Weeks later, though, *All I Want for Christmas* bombed, and Tartikoff's position again looked very tippy. If *Wayne's World* had also bombed—as everyone assumed it would—Brandon would now be looking for work. In-

stead, Tartikoff (and head of production John Goldwyn) has been vindicated, and he is now untouchable. Tartikoff is taking special pleasure in gloating to his old colleagues: He offered financial participation in *Wayne's World* to NBC, it passed, and now NBC stands to earn only a five-figure sum from the megahit. (The success of *Wayne's World* scares other studios deeply; they just don't get it. Please, God, non-Paramount executives are praying, *don't let*

Brandon get lucky again.)

3. *Callow ignorance of young Hollywood hotshots*: In *The Player*, the Katzenbergish executive played by Peter Gallagher has a brain that exists mostly to support his haircut and push SND on the cellular. In nonfiction Hollywood recently, a child-prodigy (continued on page 19)



The author (artist's conception) and Tim Robbins

One high-ranking executive has a Rolodex card with the names and ages of his own children on it

C. J. WRAY



DRY RUM



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Madonna: "It's My Movie, and I'll Lie If I Want To"

Way back in the dark, pre-drum-machine days of the seventies, when Stevie Wonder was pop music's premier artist, a musician in his band, the guitarist Michael Sembello, observed that playing with Wonder was "like going to a school that almost no one gets to attend." Of course, that was in 1978, and Stevie Wonder has since been overtaken by the times. But the question arises: Does any performer these days deserve to be thought of as a professor in this way? Our nominee, despite her ebbing popularity, is Madonna. And the proof of this contention lies in the fact that people who work for her receive an education, as Sembello did from Wonder, that is both rare and in sync with the Zeitgeist.

Three dancers who performed with her on the "Blond Ambition" tour—Oliver Crumes, Kevin Stea and Gabriel Trupin—have sued Madonna for fraud and invasion of privacy in connection with the making of the tour documentary, *Truth or Dare*. They claim they were misled about the nature of the film; they say they were told that the nonperformance scenes in which they appeared were for Madonna's private and personal use. This is one reason they did not insist on being paid for appearing in the film but are seeking compensation now.

Trupin says it wasn't until Madonna's office started hounding him to sign a performance release that he realized something was up. "We never knew anything until a few weeks before the premiere," he says. "She finally allowed us to have a screening."

Why had Madonna been so secretive with the dancers—the ones whom, throughout the film, she professed to love so dearly? For starters, the dancers claim, she didn't want to pay them. But Trupin has other problems with the film, particularly with its climactic scene, when at Madonna's behest he is kissed on the mouth by another man during a game of truth-or-dare.

Trupin maintains that during the tour, he told Madonna he was upset

with the personal nature of questions he was being asked on film. She sent him to director Alek Keshishian, who Trupin says "totally assured me, 'If there's anything you're uncomfortable with, it's not going to be in there.'"

Thus, after the screening of *Truth or Dare*, Trupin says, he begged Madonna to take out "the scene." She declined. "She told me that I was making a 'statement,'" Trupin recalls. "I said, 'I'm not making a statement—you're making a statement....I don't want this to happen.' She said I was ashamed of myself. And then she said, 'Oh, I could remove it, but I don't want to mess up the premiere.' She was really arrogant and mean." Madonna's publicist, Liz Rosenberg, while having "no official statement," calls the claims "ludicrous" and maintains that "they all signed agreements."

Trupin says his only interest is in protecting his privacy; he doesn't even want to discuss the political and cultural impact of bringing what may be the first lawsuit over

outing. His fear that the movie would affect his personal life proved well founded: "They showed the clip twice on *Geraldo*," says his mother, Sue Trupin. "Of course, the only people left in America who *didn't* know he was gay—Gabriel's grandparents—were watching."

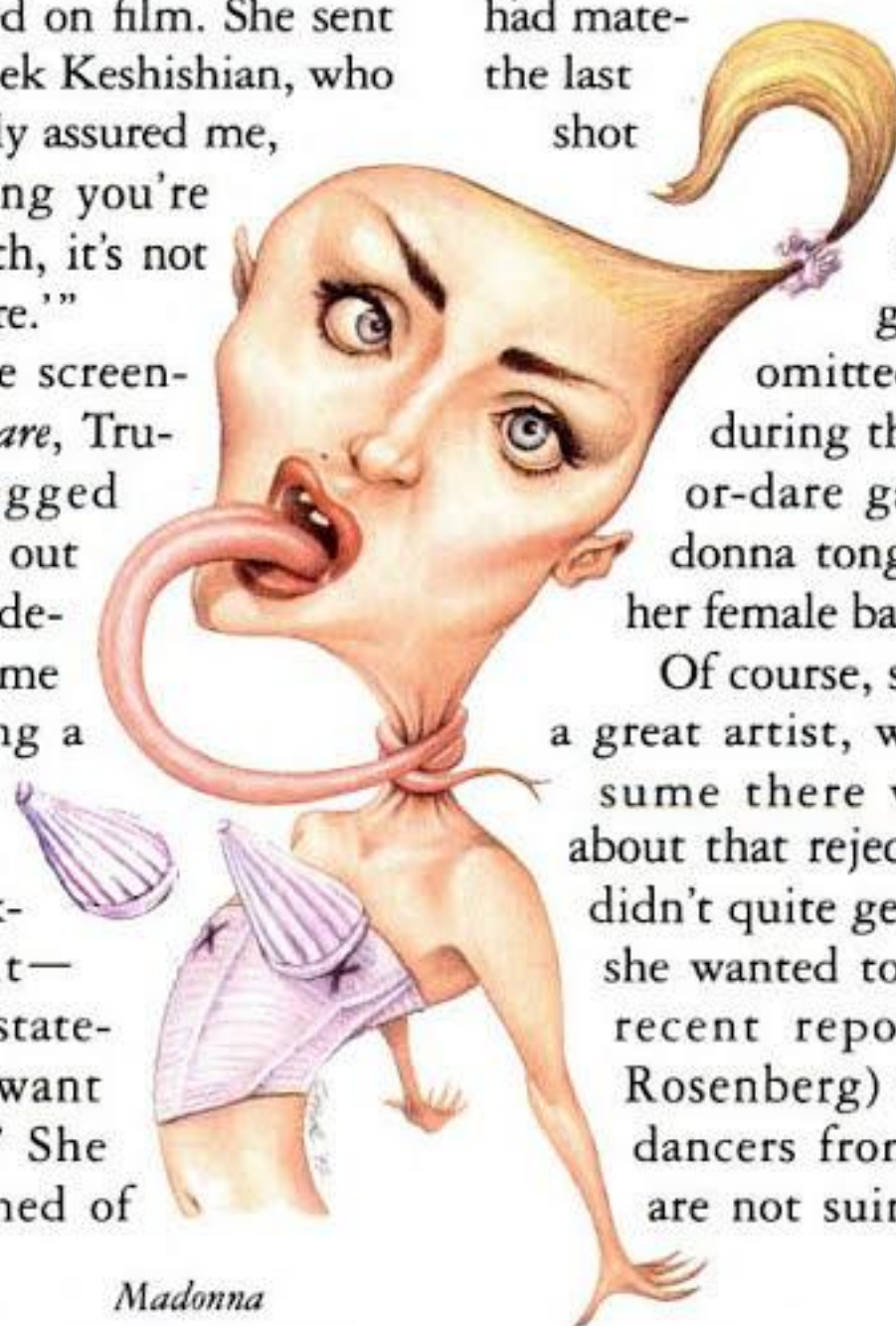
It should be noted that Madonna was not universally insensitive to qualms about scenes that might be embarrassing, and she reportedly had material deleted at the last minute. One shot featured Madonna's father audibly passing gas. Another omitted moment came during the famous truth-or-dare game, when Madonna tongue-kissed one of her female backup singers.

Of course, since Madonna is a great artist, we can safely assume there was something about that rejected footage that didn't quite get to the *statement* she wanted to make. And the recent report (denied by Rosenberg) that two other dancers from the tour who are not suing Madonna are having a record produced by her is surely just a coincidence.

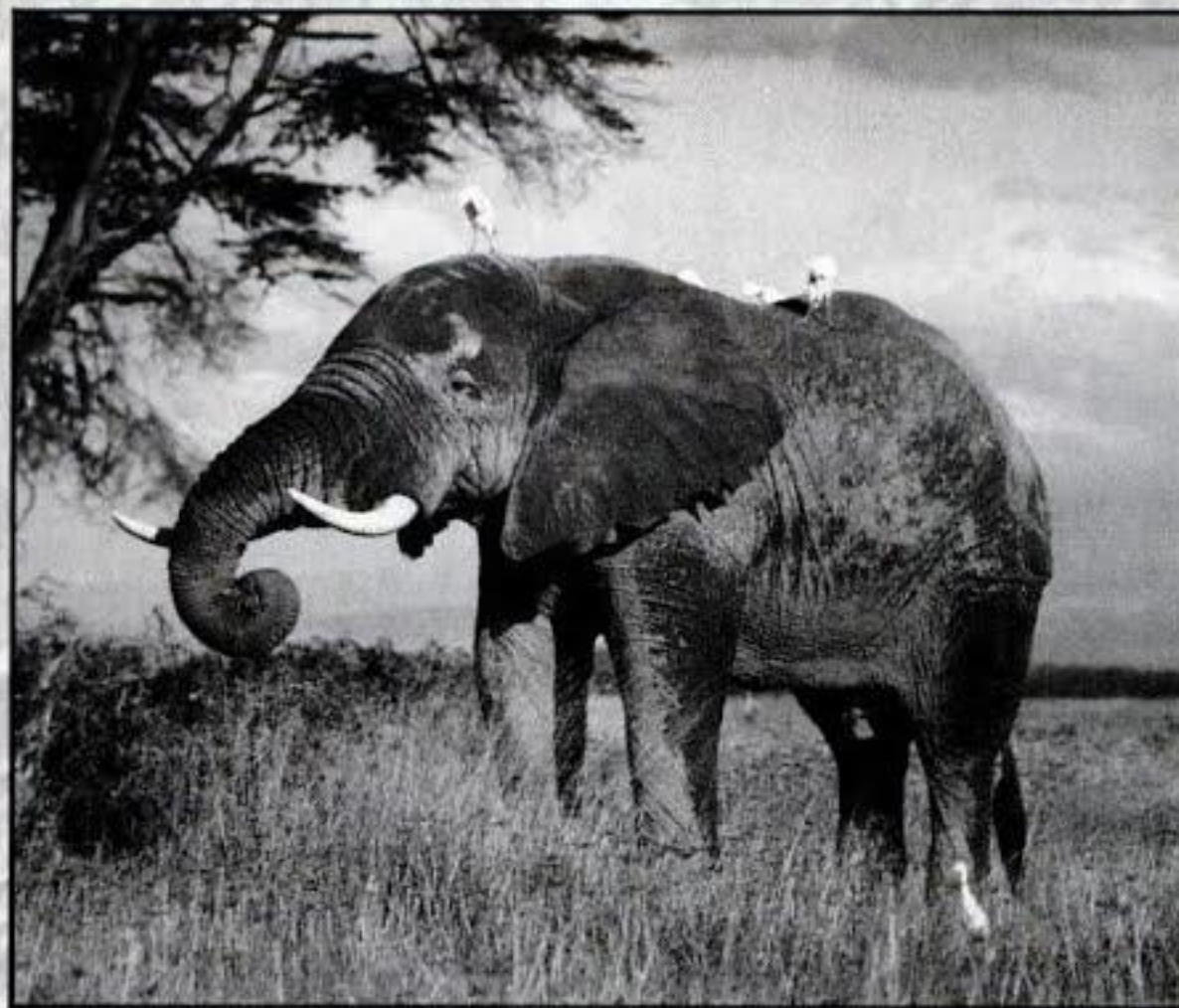
The litigation aside, the worst of it may be that Trupin

et al. just weren't ready to go to a school that almost no one gets to attend. "I really liked her and trusted her," says Trupin. "But when I told her that [I objected], she said, 'This will be the biggest lesson of your life.'"

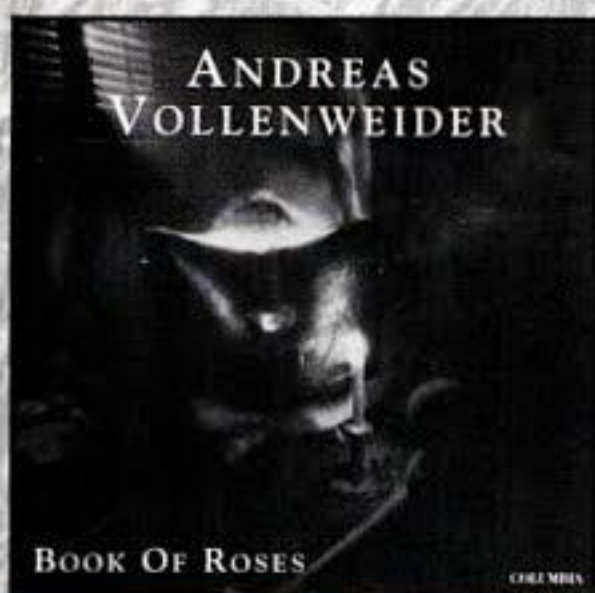
They'll never be as smart as teacher. —Fred Goodman



One scene that didn't get into the movie showed Madonna tongue-kissing a female backup singer



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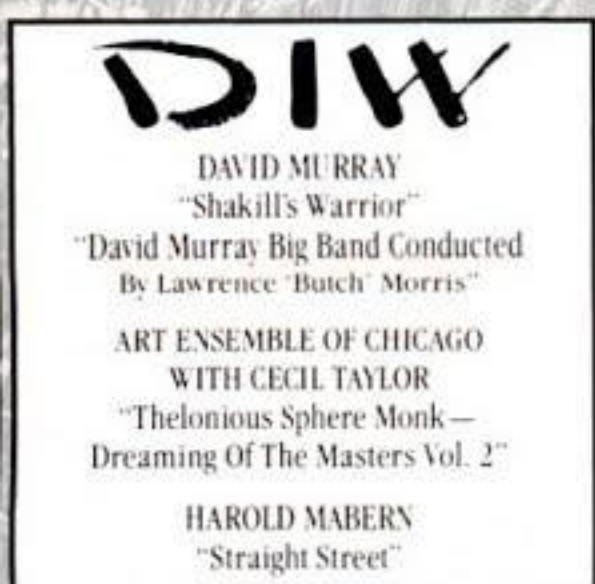
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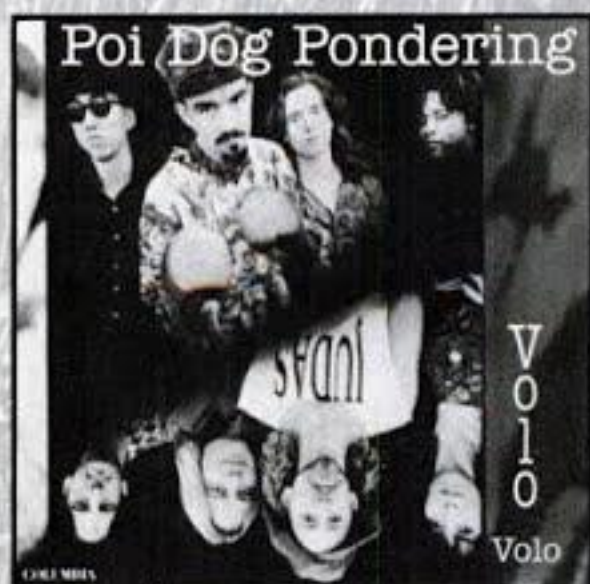
If funk could be smoked, it would be called "Cypress Hill." Featuring The Phuncky Feel One, and How I Could Just Kill A Man.



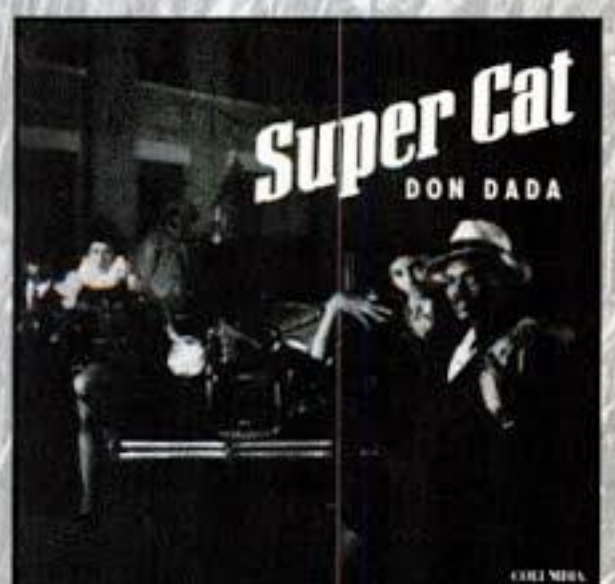
The first four U.S. releases from this critically-acclaimed label include David Murray, Harold Mabern, and Art Ensemble of Chicago.



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Diller's Crossing

In Hollywood a resignation is seldom just a resignation. More often it is the last act of some slow, hacking death struggle that every agent, lawyer, studio timeserver, producer, pool maintenance man and Encino manicurist has salivated over for weeks. Imagine the disappointment when Barry Diller, who had been CEO of Fox for seven years, resigned so abruptly and with such little fuss—he deprived the entertainment business of its favorite form of entertainment. Of course, not everyone would admit to being taken by surprise. Don Simpson, the overcompensatingly masculine coproducer of such overcompensatingly masculine pictures as *Top Gun* and *Days of Thunder*, claimed just after the Monday announcement to have known all about Diller's leave-taking the previous Friday. Simpson must be telepathic: Diller had not told even his closest associates of his decision until the weekend.

The effort to explain Diller's departure has been prodigious. The ultramacho Diller, it is said, wanted to take over CBS, NBC or Fox with (or without) David Geffen, his friend and fellow member (along with the producer-managers Sandy Gallin and Howard Rosenman) of Hollywood's powerful gay tong. However, when asked about these possibilities, a friend of Diller and Geffen's said, "No way. Barry doesn't want to spend his life being pushed around by David." There is another problem with a Geffen-Diller partnership: Geffen has said he has a long-term noncompete clause with MCA as part of his \$550 million sale of Geffen Records to the company. Since MCA has both movie and television properties, presumably Geffen would have to steer clear of backing Diller in a takeover of either a television network or a movie studio.

Some Fox employees say that Diller's boss, highly leveraged antipodal media conglomerateur Rupert Murdoch, abused him intolerably. In fact, the most plausible explanation for Diller's resignation is

the simplest: money. While at ABC he established himself with a unique programming gimmick—the made-for-TV movie—and then became head of Paramount. Marvin Davis hired Diller to run Fox in 1984, and when Murdoch bought the company a year later, he kept Diller and asked him to create a fourth television network out of a handful of independent and UHF stations. When the two made their deal, the hyper-inflated CEO salaries of the late 1980s were still a few years off, so Diller received a stock, salary and profit-participation package that has resulted in Fox-derived wealth of a mere \$70 million. (Curiously, Diller, the former chairman of Paramount, still owns nearly \$8 million worth—174,718 shares—of Paramount stock. This means that for the last few years, Diller ran one movie studio while quietly holding a large stake in a principal rival.)

You or I might think \$70 million is a lot of dough, but Disney

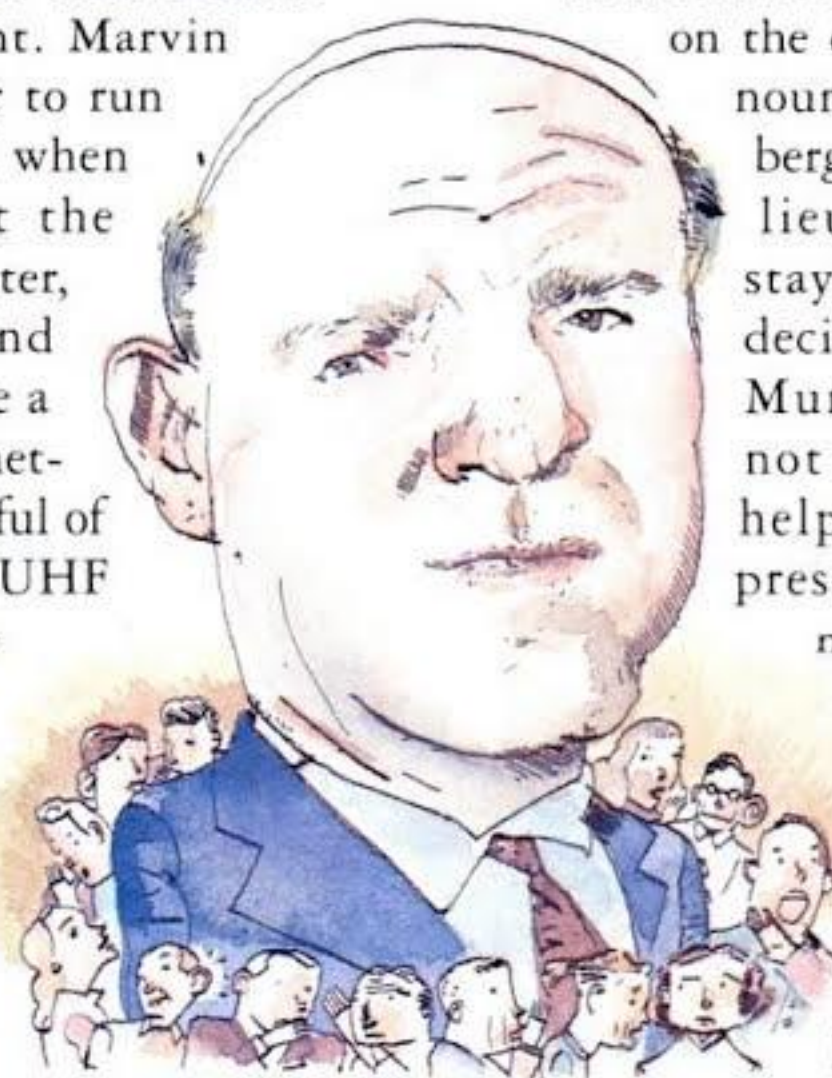
CEO Michael Eisner, once Diller's underling at Paramount and ABC, owns Disney stock and options worth *five times* as much, and Diller's friend Geffen is worth \$1 billion. Sources close to Diller say he asked Murdoch for additional equity in Fox's parent company, News Corp., and that when Murdoch rebuffed him, Diller walked.

Murdoch did not appoint a new CEO. The rumor that he would offer the job to Jeff Katzenberg, chairman of Disney Studios, gained so much steam so quickly that

on the day of Diller's announcement, Katzenberg was assuring his lieutenants he was staying put. Diller's decision to leave and Murdoch's decision not to replace him helps Joe Roth, the president of the Fox movie studio, more than anyone. In fact, it was Roth's dismissal—not Diller's voluntary exit—that had been rumored on the Fox lot for months.

Diller's absence will be felt most acutely at the television network, to which he had been devoting

about 90 percent of his time. His tenure there was distinguished by an impulse for insane micromanagement. At KTTV, the Fox affiliate in Los Angeles, Diller not only selected the news anchors but also chose the color of the newsroom phones. He dictated the precise steam-tray arrangement in the Fox commissary.



Barry

"My greatest fear," Diller said, "is being stuck in an elevator with 12 of my employees"

When he objected to a fart sound effect on a Fox show, the offending sound was deleted. Predicting what Diller would want became a well-known part of the development process; a producer's agent once recommended he "Dillerize" a script—which he assumed meant gratuitously adding some attractive lads to the story line.

In strictly personal terms, the Diller years will be remembered as a dictatorship. As we have mentioned before, many at the network believe Diller inspired the character of Homer Simpson's tyrannical boss, Mr. Burns. You get a sense of how demanding Diller can be from the way he does his laundry—it is said that he is dissatisfied with the dry cleaners in L.A., so he sends dirty clothes by air to the Waldorf-Astoria in New York. Diller knew he was not loved, and confided as much to a Smithers-like underling when he said, "My greatest fear is being stuck in an elevator with 12 of my employees."

Now the would-be Dillers have

begun maneuvering. Murdoch's real enthusiasm may be reserved for very smart, very ambitious stars such as Lucie Salhany and Steven Chao, the new president of Fox News. The 40-ish Salhany was recruited from Paramount last year to run Fox's TV-syndication business. At Paramount she was instrumental in the success of *The Arsenio Hall Show*, and at Fox she has courted Chevy Chase for a similar program. Chao's division has been responsible for some of Fox's most characteristic shows, like *COPS* and *Studs*.

Chao is a tough guy in the Diller mold. He once called Diller a liar to his face in a meeting, and Diller responded by throwing a videotape of the disastrous *Ron Reagan Show* at him, narrowly missing his head. Chao's new job will be to create a real news division at Fox. He is oddly well qualified for this task—as a Harvard senior he was accepted into the classics Ph.D. program at Yale but decided to work for the *National Enquirer* instead. At the

Enquirer, his greatest journalistic triumph was reporting the Gig Young murder-suicide story. Chao eventually got a Harvard M.B.A. and went to work as a financial whiz for Murdoch. Murdoch was impressed with Chao, and when he bought Fox, he gave him his pick of jobs.

Whither Barry? He has his money. He has his friends: His name was among those inviting Liz Taylor's friends (and famous strangers) to her 60th-birthday party. He has his future: perhaps as head of Time Warner. Steve Ross is fading; Nick Nicholas has been forced out; Gerald Levin, Nicholas's replacement, is loyal, smart and colorless—a perfect number two. Barry Diller has an extraordinarily high opinion of himself, but does even he have the hubris to imagine he could run not just Warner Bros. and HBO and Lorimar but all the Warner record labels; Little, Brown and Warner Books; and 23 magazines, including *Time*? You bet he does. —Laureen Hobbs

The Industry continued

producer—he's in his twenties—was discussing the script for a 1960s-era movie; he just didn't understand why the writers couldn't make a floppy disk and a PC crucial to a plot point.

4. *Neurotic control-freakism*: In *The Player*, the Robbins character keeps meticulous records of every one of the thousands of pitches he has heard. One actual high-ranking young major-studio executive is so obsessively thorough and all-business that his Rolodex even contains a card with his wife's name, the names and ages of his children and the name of their nanny.

5. *Office sex*: Robbins's character in *The Player* has an ongoing affair with an earnest studio D-girl, whom he betrays in the end. A tally of the trades involving sex and career advancement that occur each day in Hollywood would read like a stock ticker. Let's take just one alleged example. Wayne

Mogilefsky is a young D-guy at Silver Pictures, the charming and low-key Joel Silver's production company. (Silver is the impresario who brought us *Die Hard*, *Die Harder* and *The Last Boy Scout*.) According to Mogilefsky, Silver Pictures president Michael Levy had indicated he would develop a screenplay of Mogilefsky's called *Amnesia*. Mogilefsky claims that on Valentine's Day—this is Hollywood, remember, where they invented romance—Levy told him, "Do me or I'll get amnesia about *Amnesia*." Mogilefsky has complained to Warner Bros., where Silver has his deal (and which pays the actually very competent Levy \$800,000 a year), and, three weeks after the alleged incident, to state authorities; Mogilefsky's lawyer also represents a woman who has sued a former Geffen Records executive, alleging that he stuck his erect penis in her ear. Like his boss, Levy, who denies the charges, ner-

vously twitches his leg as he speaks; he must be twitchier than ever these days. On the other hand, Levy could turn out to be the real-life Tim Robbins character and wind up running Warner Bros.

I didn't mean to suggest in March that Ron Meyers's unseemly compulsions were unique at CAA, or to imply that Ovitz is an ascetic whose interest in attractive women is strictly professional. SPY regrets the error.

And speaking of Mike, he's a regular party monster these days: A couple of weeks after throwing a surprise 50th-birthday party for his great friend Michael Eisner at Mortons, he celebrated spring by holding private screenings at CAA of the uncut, extra-dirty version of *Basic Instinct*. When the writing credit came up on-screen—SCREENPLAY BY JOE ESZTERHAS—people actually *bissed*. Mike must have been proud of his assembled foot soldiers. See you Monday night at Mortons. —Celia Brady

Naked City

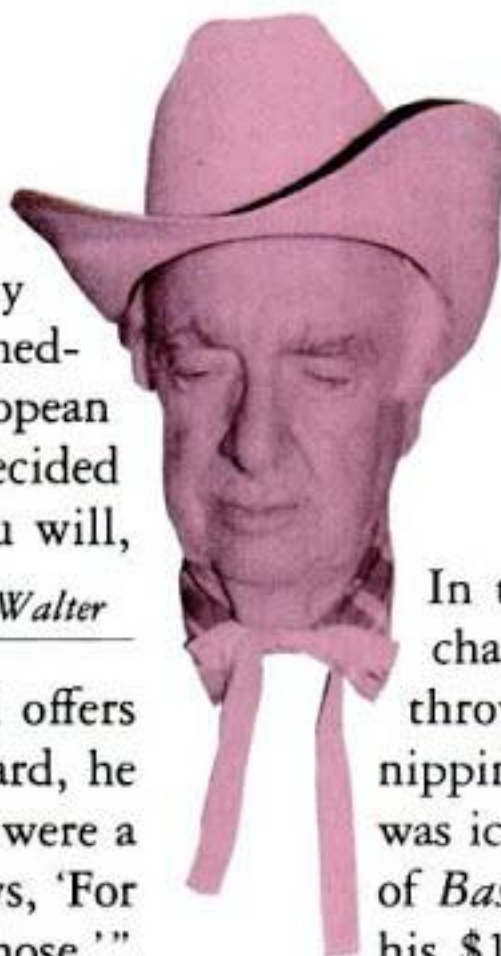
The Usual Suspects

1

The transition from Most Trusted Man in America to dirty old man is not an easy one, but **Walter Cronkite** is trying his darnedest. Following a recent interview for a European TV program, the 75-year-old Cronkite decided to tell a joke to the crew. Imagine, if you will, that smoothly practiced, reassuringly Walter avuncular voice: "An old man goes up to an old woman at a nursing home and offers her \$500 to have sex. She agrees. Afterward, he says, 'That was great. If I had known you were a virgin, I would have paid \$1,000.' She says, 'For \$1,000 I would have taken off my panty hose.'" Those present squirmed uncomfortably, barely managing sympathy chuckles.

2

The honeymoon is over for poorly groomed terrorist **Yassir Arafat**. Reports of his marriage to his secretary appeared in February, months after it supposedly took place. Why the delay? Because the wedding may have never happened. Details like extreme differences in age and religion (she's Christian) may have been a shrewd smokescreen, just intriguing enough to divert attention from rumors of homosexuality. Early this year a PLO ambassador was confronted by an Arab counterespionage muckety-muck who told him that his office had photographs showing Arafat having sex with a prominent Palestinian man. Arafat soon learned of the spook's unsettling revelation, and at a meeting of his lieutenants he demanded that his ambassador describe the chat in detail. Afterward, Arafat sat silently for a long time. Finally the noble freedom fighter continued the meeting with a meager, un- Yassir convincing grin. Days



later, newspapers around the world were running the story of a happily married *and remarkably virile* old man.

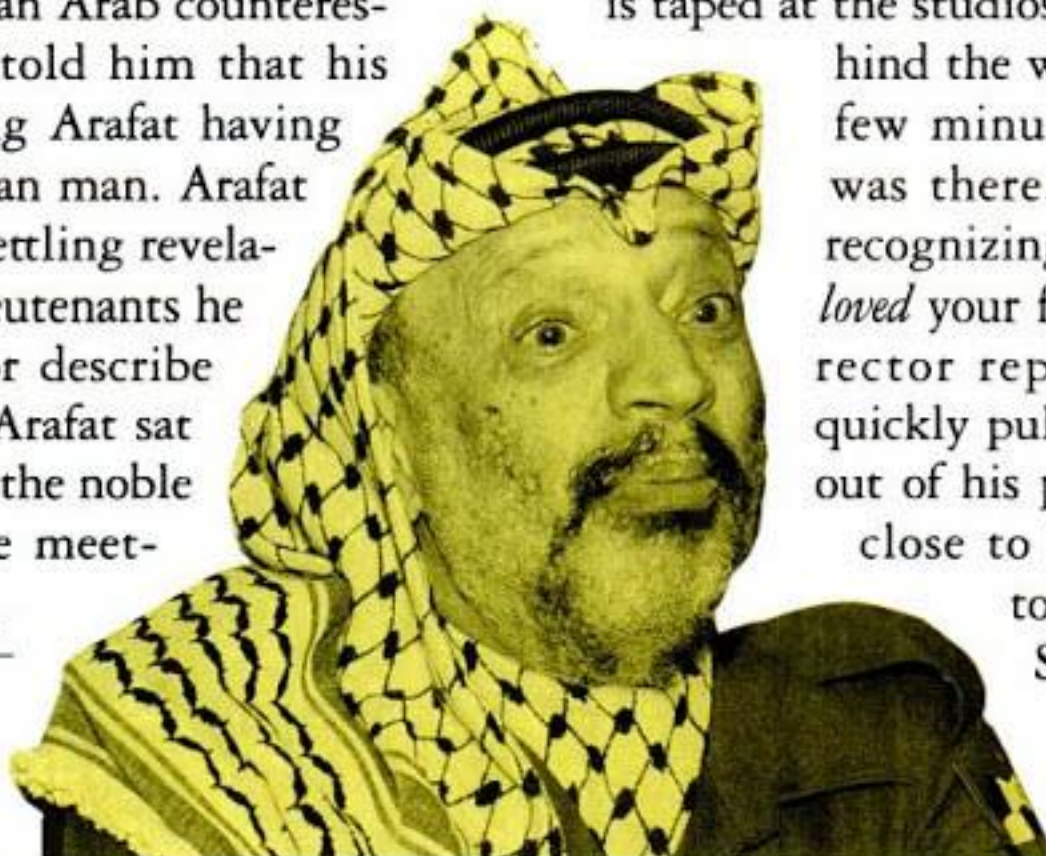
3

In the old days, Hollywood was rife with charming stories of stars botching stunts—throwing punches that were too authentic, nipping costars with a sword thrust. Nobody was ice-picked to death during the production of *Basic Instinct*, but **Michael Douglas**, despite his \$17 million salary, did manage to wound

Sharon Stone: During and after hours of simulated cunnilingus, Stone complained Michael that her legs were painfully chafed by the star's stubbly face.

4

Brilliant but slightly eccentric auteur...or maniac? *You make the call*. At the studios of WNYC, a Manhattan public-TV station, a female employee and a friend were discussing the movie *JFK*—something employees of public-TV stations may well spend most of their time doing. In this instance, however, **Oliver Stone** was about to be interviewed on the PBS show *Open Mind*, which is taped at the studios. The director crept up behind the woman, eavesdropping for a few minutes before she realized he was there. Finally she turned and, recognizing Stone, stammered, "I—I loved your film." "Thank you," the director replied. "And," he added, quickly pulling a tiny Krazy Kat doll out of his pocket and holding it very close to her face, "*he* thanks you, too." Without another word, Stone shambled off. ☾



Star Search—Campaign '92 Edition

There's nothing unusual about a citizen's hesitation in deciding which presidential candidate to support. But the indecision of *Hollywood* citizens wreaks havoc with the very, very important celebrity-endorsement aspect of the campaign. Indeed, just before Paul Tsongas withdrew, his headquarters promised to fax us a roster of celebrity endorsers; this list turned out to be a half-page of *politicians'* names, followed by several dozen blank pages. As a staff member for one candidate put it, "These celebrity folks are so flighty, they see their name in print and back off."

—Daniel Radosh

GEORGE BUSH

Campaign press secretary Victoria Clarke pointed out—in case we'd missed it—that **Arnold Schwarzenegger** had campaigned for the president. We also recalled that in 1988, Schwarzenegger supported Pierre Du Pont, and we thought perhaps Bush might require a little backup. Clarke then offered this list of Bush's "associates and friends": **Charlton Heston, Chuck Norris, Robert Stack, Efrem Zimbalist Jr. and Clint Eastwood; Loretta Lynn, Barbara Mandrell, the Beach Boys and Frank Sinatra; Joan Rivers and Mary Hart; Don Johnson, Melanie Griffith and Kevin Costner.** Really? Costner? "Well, they play golf together," offered Clarke.

PAT BUCHANAN

Although Ted Turner has reportedly donated \$1,000 to his campaign, a Buchanan spokesperson said simply, "I haven't heard of any [celebrity supporters], but that doesn't mean there aren't any. I don't read the entertainment pages every day."

BILL CLINTON

Western finance director Jerry Stern bristled at the notion that celebrities weren't lining up behind his guy. "We have a lot of people," said Stern. Like who? "Like actors, producers, studio heads, agents." Could he give us their names? Stern hesitated, then said, "I'll give you one of each. There are others, but we're not prepared to give you more than that." We can only guess how he chose these names out of a larger selection: Arkansas-born actress **Mary Steenburgen**, producer **Linda Bloodworth-Thomason**, studio head **Mike Medavoy** and agent **Peter Benedek**.

JERRY BROWN

Brown's press coordinator, Tom Pier, provided a list of entertainers who appeared at a February fundraiser, but cautioned that these were not necessarily endorsements. We were told that even **Sally Kellerman**, who did voice-overs for Brown's campaign video, could not be officially counted. The possibility that some of these folks had nothing better to do than attend a Jerry Brown rally does not, in fact, seem too farfetched: **Talia Shire, Bonnie Bedelia, Ed Begley Jr., Tawny Little, Freda Payne and Dennis Christopher.** Pier admitted, "You know, I don't even know who some of these people are." ☾



Pro Schmoozing: Clinton manages to embrace Linda Bloodworth-Thomason and greet superstar John Ritter—simultaneously.



The Fine Print

by Jamie Malanowski



Cases You Never See on *Doogie Howser, M.D.*

Ordinarily it is at this time of year, when the tulips have popped up and the robins are chirping, that we like to go inside the house and peruse the previous year's issues of *The American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology*. Regrettably, the 1991 issues were much less interesting than their predecessors, where we read about the woman who killed herself by eating coins and the man who died when a fish jumped down his windpipe, among others.

Consequently, we have begun reading the monthly journal *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality*. A generally sobersided publication, *MAHS* does have its Unusual Case column, which features synopses of, well, *darned* unusual cases submitted by physicians. For example, a psychiatrist in Manhattan wrote in about a patient who was in the Army and wondered whether his sexual practices made him "different" from other people: "I like girls, and I certainly enjoy sex with them, but...I like having sex with guys, too.... [And] from what I understand, the other guys in my ▶

unit never had sex with anybody in their family. I used to have sex with my mother, my father, and...sisters and brothers....And I used to have sex with some of the [farm] animals."

When the psychiatrist asked whether the soldier could afford to get private professional help when he went back to civilian life, the patient said, "Doctor, that's a very personal question." *Ba-dump?*

Usually, though, these accounts do not suggest *Playboy's* Party Jokes so much. A doctor in Kentucky described a patient who asked him to remove a die from her vagina. Her boyfriend had persuaded her to insert a pair—he "enjoyed the sensation of something hard hitting his penis"—and one got lost. A doctor in Fort Worth wrote about a 74-year-old man who came in complaining of a "severely swollen penis [that] was covered with a slightly yellowish crust." The doctor—and this is just as weird as anything the patient did—*didn't examine the afflicted penis* but prescribed oral medication and topical agents. Matters did not improve; on the man's third visit, the doctor took a look. He found a rubber band under the foreskin. "Doctor, how could it have gotten there?" was the patient's response. Later he blamed a friend.

A doctor from Pennsylvania shared the tale of a 40-ish factory worker who came in with a severely damaged scrotum; the left testicle was missing, and ▶

I Remember, Sort Of Did Dan Rather

Really Take Acid Just Once?

The recent memoir of CBS newsreader Dan Rather, *I Remember*, reveals a heretofore unknown side of the anchorman. For instance, he dumped chili out of a high-rise window onto a passerby in a white suit (Chapter 17) and had his toothbrush stolen at summer camp (Chapter 9). Curiously, that's about all Rather *does* remember clearly.

"I'm not certain that we had so much as a hand-cranked, smudgy mimeograph machine available to us at school (this was aeons before Xeroxing) and can't recall how we produced any multiple copies." (page 82)

"I was so close to my goal—and I turned chicken; I was never sure why." (page 88)

"He was a congenial, open fellow, and I'm sad that I can no longer recall his name." (page 93)

"I don't recall how long I'd been in pain by then." (page 95)

"I can't recall how we got to Dr. Cope, but the aura of super-doctor clung to his presence." (page 98)

"I can't recall which one it was who first held up President Franklin D. Roosevelt to me as an example." (page 115)

"One of these—I can't recall his name—became a special friend of mine and I watched his struggles with the demon rum closely." (page 119)

"I'm unclear about the details, but Glenn married his girl and also quit school when he was fifteen, and his golden touch deserted him." (page 131)

"I'll call her Miss Rose, although I'm embarrassed to say I'm not positive that I remember her name...." (page 162)

"It's possible that my memory is playing tricks on me. I may be repressing certain events because they're unpleasant. That wouldn't be unusu-

al....It could be meaningful that I do not distinctly recall two incidents remembered by my sister, Patricia.... Pat is a reliable reporter and I have every reason to believe that all this happened as she recalls it—even if I don't." (pages 200–201)

"While I don't recall what kind of case he made on that occasion, I have a graphic mental picture of another time when I was present to see my father literally rise in defense of men fighting for their civil rights." (page 202)

"When I told Mother that I had prayed for better grades in school and for a certain Christmas present, I forget what, she explained that this was improper." (page 208)

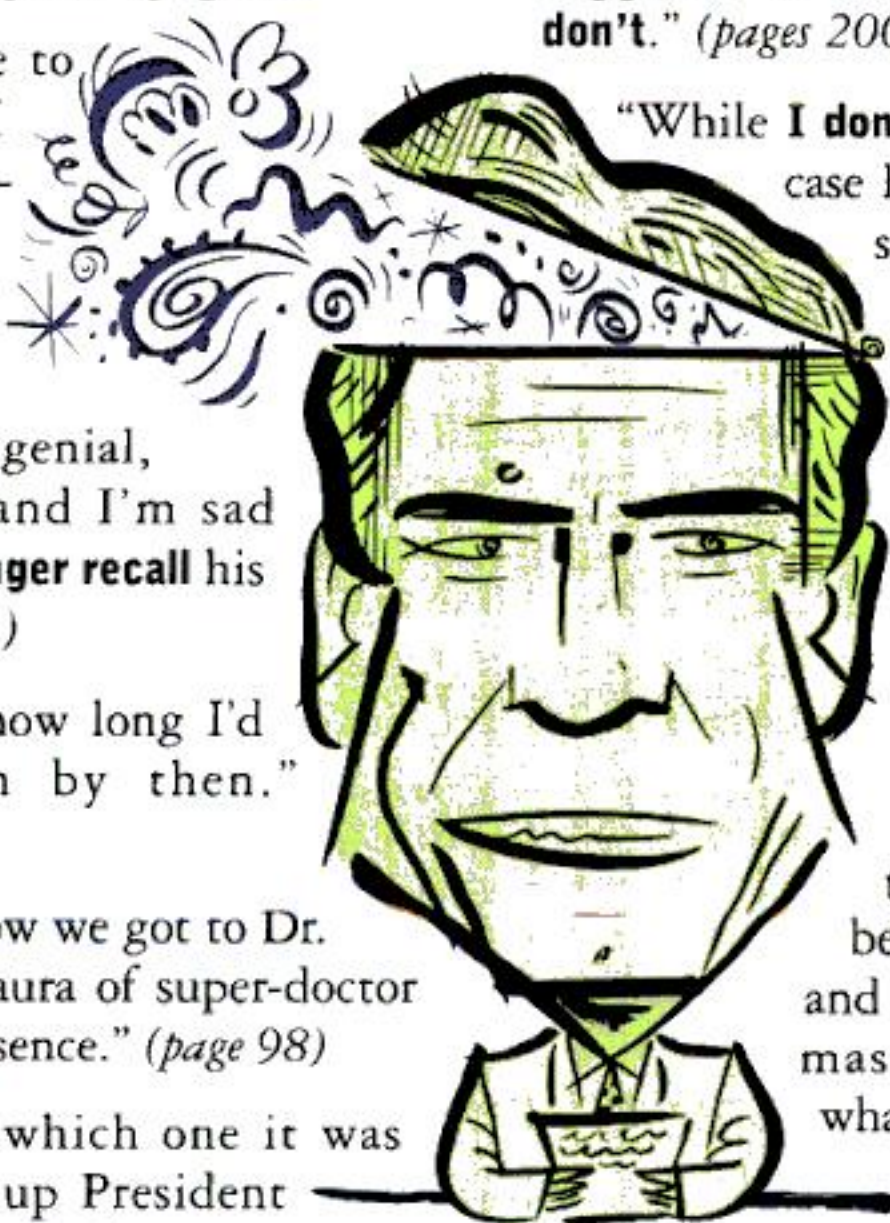
"For the life of me, I can't recall which one of the dwarves' parts was mine to enact. Was I Sneezy? Doubtful." (page 218)

"Where was I, the future reporter, while this was crashing around all about us? I'm embarrassed to admit...I haven't the faintest idea." (page 237)

"He spoke no more than two sentences and moved right on. I don't remember his words...." (page 247)

"I do not have a photographic memory, [like those] who can memorize all the cards played from a deck at the blackjack table." (pages 256–257)

—Bobby Hansson and Brian Steinberg





THE BOHEMIAN SPIRIT.
NOT TOO HARD TO SPOT.

Bohemia
JUDGED THE BEST



there were deep lacerations that the injured man had sutured himself—with a heavy-duty staple gun and eight one-inch staples. The injured man—“an unmarried loner,” as the doctor describes him—explained what had happened: At lunchtime, when his co-workers left the machine shop to eat, the man “frequently masturbated by holding his penis against the canvas drive-belt of a piece of running machinery. One day, as he approached orgasm...his scrotum suddenly became caught between the pulley-wheel and the drive-belt [and] he was thrown into the air and landed a few feet away....He stapled the wound closed and resumed work.”

Men are not the only ones prone to unusual approaches to self-gratification. A doctor in Missouri wrote about a 32-year-old woman who came into an emergency room to see whether she needed stitches in her vagina, saying she had gotten "carried away" while masturbating with a pair of scissors. "It's quite enjoyable," the patient confided. "No man can compare with cold, hard steel."



But None of Them Bought Tube Socks

The next time you hear a congressman or senator complain about the difficulties of raising campaign contributions, you might suggest to him or her that he or she raise less and spend it more prudently. ►

We're in the Nineties Now

Part II of a Series: Professional Athletics

The Atlanta Braves' implicitly racist name, and their fans' tomahawk chops, are only the tip of the iceberg. (Editors of the Portland *Oregonian*, take note.)

TEAM	POLITICALLY INCORRECT CONNOTATION
SEATTLE MARINERS	Possible use of gill nets
ST. LOUIS BLUES	Exploits creative contributions of African Americans, in a sport with very few African American players
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS NEW YORK JETS EDMONTON OILERS HOUSTON OILERS PITTSBURGH STEELERS	Glorify squandering of natural resources, which rightly belong to Native Americans
CALIFORNIA ANGELS NEW JERSEY DEVILS NEW ORLEANS SAINTS	Reinforce Western concept of good/evil
LOS ANGELES KINGS SACRAMENTO KINGS	Support monarchy over rule of the people
CHICAGO BEARS CINCINNATI BENGALS PHILADELPHIA EAGLES ATLANTA FALCONS ATLANTA HAWKS SEATTLE SEAHAWKS	Endangered species
GREEN BAY PACKERS	Meat packers, offensive to vegetarians
NEW YORK GIANTS SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS	Intimidate vertically challenged Americans
MILWAUKEE BREWERS	Promotes consumption of alcohol
SAN ANTONIO SPURS	Condonates cruelty toward horses

—Brian Clark

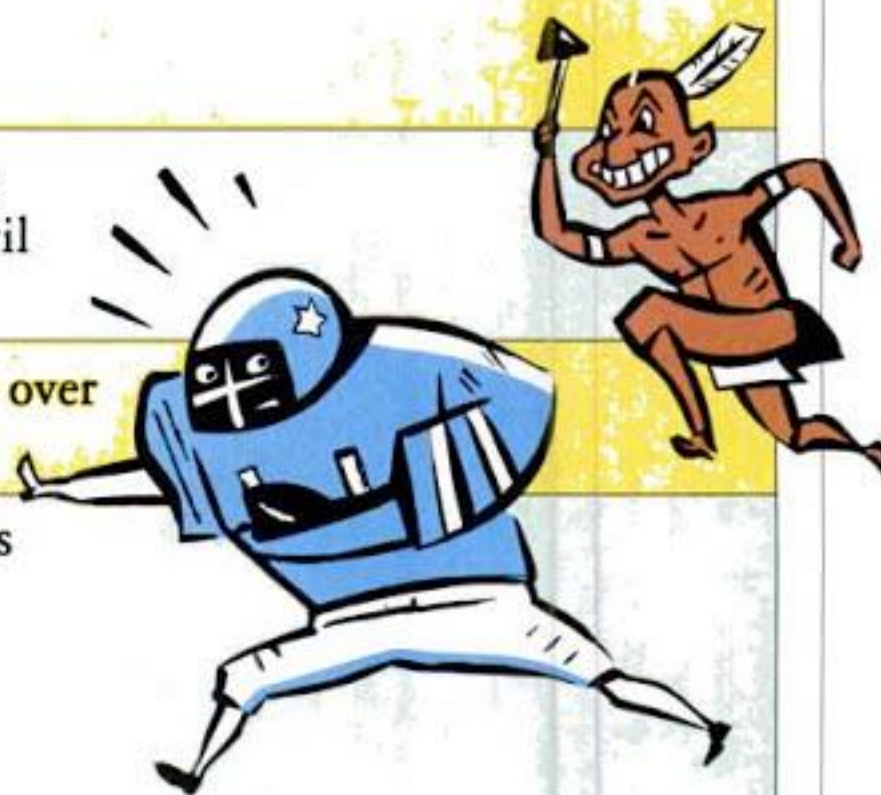


Illustration by Mark Matcho

Meet the Teens



Camile A. Paglia, 16-year-old senior at Nottingham High School, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Pasquale Paglia. She is a member of the National Honor Society, the Latin Club and the orchestra. She is editor of the school newspaper and copy editor of the yearbook. Camile won a letter of commendation in the National Merit Examination, was awarded a block letter for girls' sports, and is Nottingham's representative in writing competition of the National Council of Teachers of English. For two years, she has been engaged in an extensive program of research on Amelia Earhart. Camile said she plans to be a professor of English literature.

The Girl Most Likely

Camille Paglia, Before

One fateful weekend in 1963, while most of America coped with a national trauma, one town celebrated the blossoming of future postfeminist blusterer Camille Paglia. Paglia was profiled in the Syracuse (N.Y.) *Herald-American's* "Meet the Teens" feature on Sunday, November 24, 1963. Yes, *that* November weekend, when a masculine product of the effete, introspective Ivy League was struck down by a sexually frustrated multiculturalist Dallas resident—who was in turn eliminated by the proprietor of a socially therapeutic nightclub service. —Andrew Milner



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A recent examination of campaign spending reports on file at the Federal Election Commission reveals that our leaders spent the money they raised in the following ways:

On tickets: Rep. John Murtha of Pennsylvania spent \$1,642 for season tickets to the Pittsburgh Steelers; Rep. Guy Vander Jagt of Michigan spent \$2,023 for season tickets to the Muskegon Hockey Club; Rep. William Clay of Missouri spent \$546 on season tickets to see Washington's football team; Rep. Barbara Vucanovich of Nevada spent \$120 on tickets to a UNLV basketball game, along with \$50 for food, \$15 for transportation and \$105.97 for UNLV sweatshirts; Sen. Wyche Fowler of Georgia bought \$18,240 worth of tickets to *Miss Saigon*; and Rep. John Myers of Indiana spent

\$4,642 on season tickets to see the pathetic Indianapolis Colts, making one wonder whether he should be permitted to vote on more important federal expenditures.

To play golf: Rep. William Coyne of Pennsylvania spent \$265 on various golf outings; Rep. Ray McGrath of New York spent \$275 on a golf outing; ▶

May Datebook

1 May Day. Citizens of the former Soviet Union all but ignore the international worker's holiday as they discover the joys of capitalist unemployment. Meanwhile, in the U.S., citizens all but ignore the international worker's holiday as they discover the joys of capitalist unemployment.

10 Mother's Day. Renée Hershey of Hallmark Cards told SPY, "We probably are much more honest

about relationships in the nineties, and the cards will reflect that." The trick: finding a word that rhymes with *dysfunctional*.

15-17 Week-end whale watch off



Cape Cod, sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History. A \$400

ticket includes a whale slide talk by Dr. Charles "Stormy" Mayo. According to the registration form, the museum "assumes no responsibility howsoever caused for personal injury, personal or property loss or damage in connection with any

service resulting directly or indirectly from acts of God, detention, annoyance, delays and expenses arising from strikes, thefts, failure of any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, civil disturbance, government regulations, discrepancies or changes in transit or hotel services over which the museum has no control." Furthermore, "there can be no guarantee that whales will be sighted." Enjoy that Stormy Mayo slide talk, though.

23 Opening game of the writers'-and-artists'

softball league in Sag Harbor, New York; after each of nonwriter-nonartist Mort Zuckerman's pitches, his teammates, only a few of whom work for him, cheer enthusiastically.

25 Memorial Day; Connie Sellecka turns 37. Two great opportunities for a parade.



26 Last day to see an art exhibit at the New York Marxist School in which "through works constructed from poster paint, paper, and tape, the auditorium [is] transformed into a full-scale depiction of a yacht club." Tape? Yacht club? As Marxist schemes go, this one is right down there with collective farming on the realism scale. ▶

Blurb-o-Mat Capsule Reviews by Walter Monheit™, the Movie Publicist's Friend



PATRIOT GAMES, starring Harrison Ford, Anne Archer (Paramount) pppp
Walter Monheit says, "You can have your peace dividend! Just give me some Clancy-tastic hardware! This year, Oscar's buying American—and he'll be driving a Ford lately!"

WHITE SANDS, starring Willem Dafoe, Mickey Rourke (Warner Bros.) pppp
Walter Monheit says, "Makes *Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man* look like Jan and Dean! Motorcyclin' Mickey is back—you can bet your BMX on it!"

WHERE THE DAY TAKES YOU, starring Dermot Mulroney, Lara Flynn Boyle (New Line) pppp
Walter Monheit says, "Here's one infectious Boyle I don't mind! Ooof!—I can't stop the swelling!"

What the monocles mean: ppp—excellent;
pppp—indisputably a classic

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BUT I SURE COULD USE THAT CAMSHAFT FOR MY '57 LADA!

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JIM, YOU MEAN YOU KNEW ALL ALONG THAT WE COULD HAVE JUST SENT AWAY TO BARQ'S FOR GENUINE "COMMUNIST PARTY FAVORS"?

KRAKOW

HEY PAUL, LOOK! JIM'S WOUND LOOKS JUST LIKE GORBACHEV'S BIRTHMARK!

RUSS, HAND ME A BARQ'S!

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The \$550 Million Question

Rep. Dean Gallo of New Jersey spent \$600 on a golf outing; Rep. Dan Burton of Indiana spent \$1,100 on a golf outing; Rep. James Traficant of Ohio spent \$9,100 on a golf outing and dinner; and Rep. Ben Jones of Georgia spent \$1,600 on greens fees and cart rental.

To celebrate yourself:

Rep. James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin spent more than \$1,400 to throw himself a birthday party; Oklahoma senator David Boren spent \$4,026 to throw himself a birthday party, plus \$107 for party hats and \$2,488 for photos (Boren also spent about \$22,000 to redecorate his Washington office, including \$14,639 on art and \$4,495 on an illuminated globe); and Rep. George Miller of California spent \$2,476—all of it at the Liquor Barn on Main Street in Walnut Creek—to throw himself a birthday party.

On candy: Utah senator Orrin Hatch bought \$602 worth of candy "for the reception area"; Rep. Harold Volkmer of Missouri bought \$154 worth of Tootsie Rolls.

On mementos: Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware spent \$6,787 on "mementos"; Sen. Trent Lott of Mississippi spent \$350 on "mementos"; Wyoming senator Malcolm Wallop spent \$1,250 on "mementos"; and Kentucky senator Wendell Ford spent \$3,830 on "mementos." Minnesota senator Paul Wellstone, once a college professor, spent \$2,696 on "mementos." ☺

Late last year, the BCCI scandal was abruptly resolved when the bank agreed to plead guilty to racketeering, fraud, larceny and money-laundering charges and forfeit to the government all of its U.S. assets—precisely \$550 million. What is it about \$550 million? Is it coincidence that pretty much every monetary sum of consequence during the past decade—be it shortfall, settlement, fine, seizure or infrastructure-repair estimate—has been the same amount? Does its convenient just-over-half-a-billion-ness alone account for its popularity? Or is it that, like Supreme Court decisions, this number has—*just by having been used the last time*—become the standard for big-ticket reasonableness and suitability, the right number, the done thing?

JANUARY 1992: The state of New Jersey overcomes its **\$550 million** 1991 budget deficit, mainly by selling 4.4 miles of Interstate 95 to the New Jersey Turnpike Authority. However, 1992 begins with another **\$550 million** deficit.

NOVEMBER 1991: *Newsday* reports that Mafioso Michael Franzese, arrested for parole violation, attempted to buy out Cannon Films in 1990 for **\$550 million**.

NOVEMBER 1990: Michael Milken's take from Drexel in 1987 is revealed to have been **\$550 million**.

NOVEMBER 1990: Orange County voters approve a tax measure that, in part, will pay for widening the Santa Ana Freeway—at a cost of **\$550 million**.

MARCH 1990: David Geffen sells his record company to MCA—for **\$550-million** worth of MCA stock.

NOVEMBER 1989: An editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* reports that if Poland's free-market economy is to survive, the country needs international support—including **\$550 million** from the World Bank.

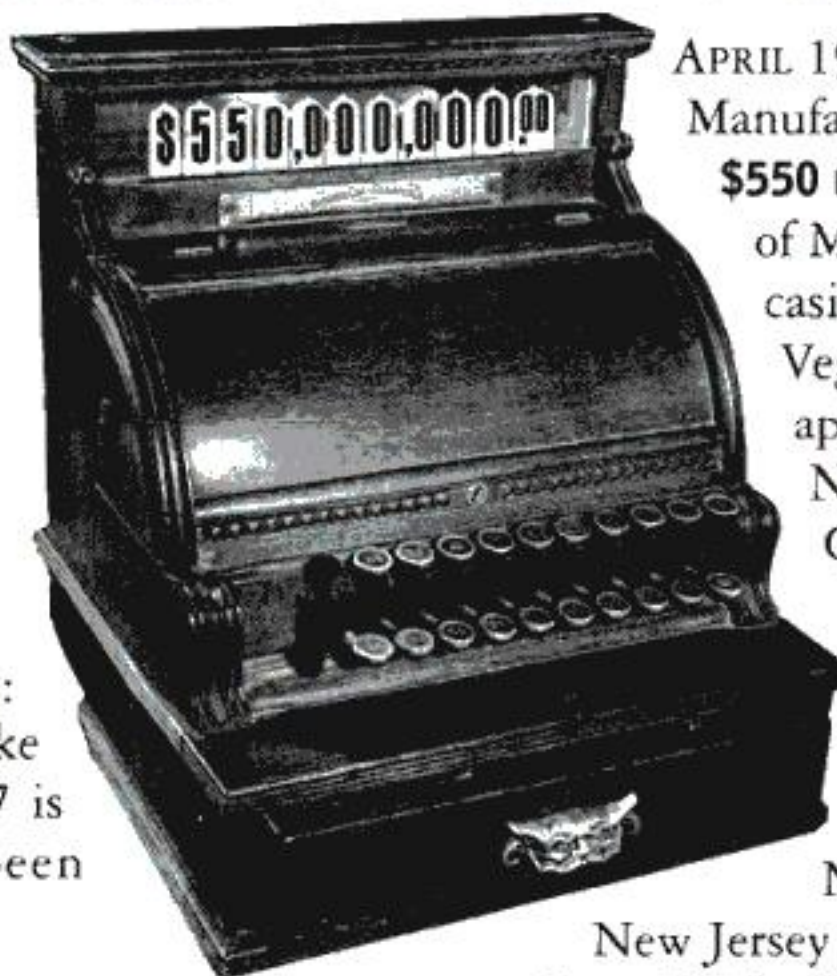
JANUARY 1988: The federal government threatens the Metropolitan Transit Authority that unless it bans smoking on the Long Island Rail Road, it will not receive its **\$550 million** federal subsidy.

APRIL 1986: Bally Manufacturing's plan for a **\$550 million** acquisition of MGM Grand casino-hotels in Las Vegas and Reno is approved by the Nevada Gaming Commission.

JUNE 1985: *The New York Times* reports that the Port Authority of New York and

New Jersey plans to contribute **\$550 million** to the New York State housing plan.

JUNE 1982: New York's State Power Authority announces plans to build a 180-mile-long power line to bring cheaper hydroelectric power to metropolitan New York. The cost: **\$550 million**. —Jill Pope



The Latest Line

This Month: Odds Against News-Makers' Posing Nude in a Magazine

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi	100:1
Anita Hill	75:1
Alessandra Mussolini	20:1
Desiree Washington	10:1
Carolyn Warmus	5:1
Gennifer Flowers	1:1



Watch Out, Rebbe, There's a Monkey on Your Back!

Israel's former chief rabbi, Ovadia Yosef, recently declared that trained monkeys may be brought into Jewish homes to perform chores forbidden on the Sabbath, such as turning on lights and doing dishes. The catch, Reuters reported, is that the monkeys must be *borrowed*, since any animal living in a Jewish household is beholden to Jewish law. SPY contacted authorities in the realms of Jewish law and animal rights—and one organization that encompasses both—for comment on the rabbi's decree.

Rabbi Ira Youdorin, Stephen Wise Synagogue, Manhattan: "It's a valid decision, as the Ten Commandments say that no member of a Jewish household *or its animal stock* can work on [the Sabbath]. Even a monkey has entitlements under Jewish law. Of course, I don't think my co-op would allow such a thing."

Roberta Kalechofsky, founder, Jews for Animal Rights: "My ruling is that human beings should be responsible for their own world. If you're using

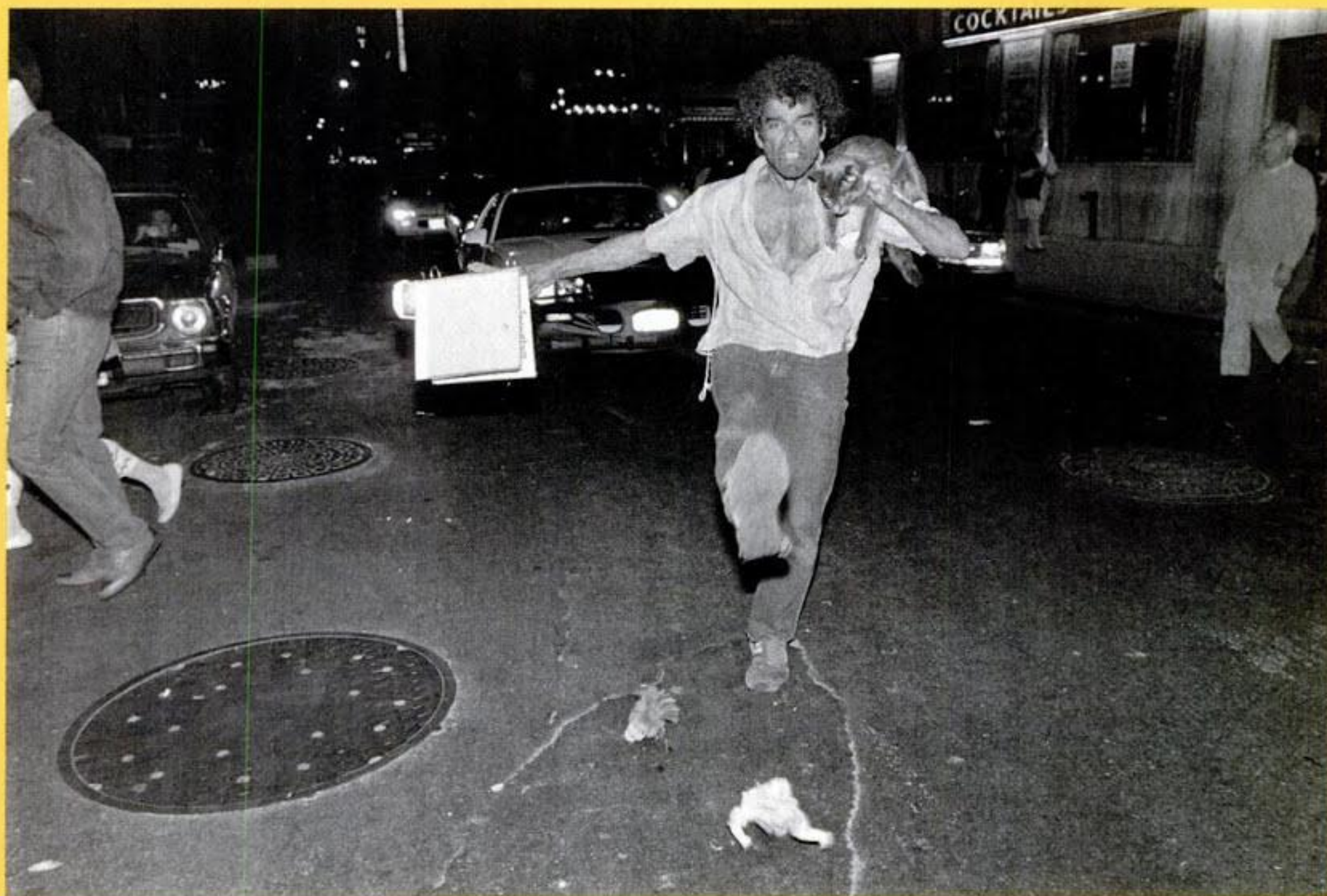
a monkey to turn on *Shabbos* lights, you must make sure you're not causing the monkey any sorrow."

Steven Simmons, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals: "We certainly would be opposed to using nonhumans in an exploitative manner. This could set up a situation where animals were trained just for this purpose, which would subject them to cruelty. Besides, leasing animals, which is what such a ruling would require, is exploitative."

Herbert Block, Mayor Dinkins's Jewish community liaison: "If this is the ruling, it shows how clever and resourceful the Jewish people can be."

Fred Koontz, curator of primates, the New York Zoological Society: "Such a plan would require a market of monkeys available for service. That would open up the monkey trade, which could further jeopardize the 189 primate species already endangered. And remember, a monkey's not like a dog. It'll defecate whenever, wherever it wants." —*Gersh Kuntzman*

It's a Wonderful Town!



Man kicking the head off his doll in Times Square.

Photograph by Andrew Savulich

Separated at Birth?



Dave Magadan...



and Steve Winwood?



Anjelica Huston...



and Laurence Olivier?



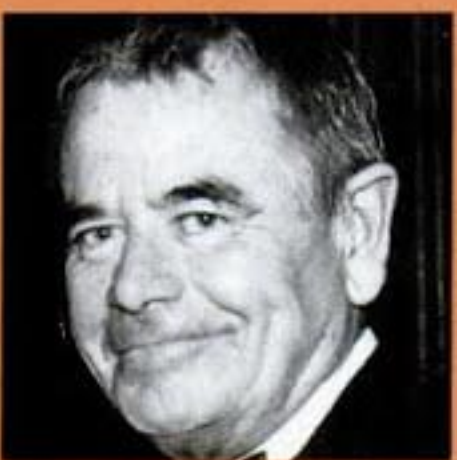
George Carlin...



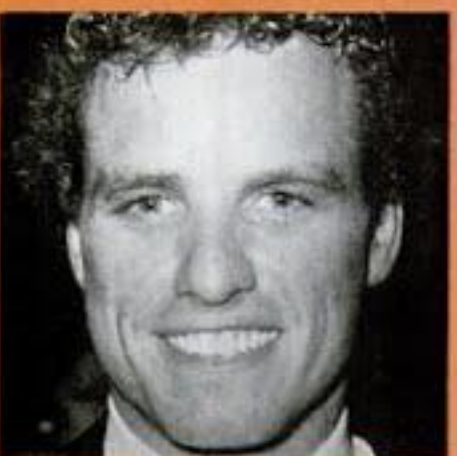
and Pee-wee Herman?



Antonin Scalia...



and Glenn Ford?



Joe Kennedy...



and Mike Milken?

Naked City

Meet the Nobelists! This Month's Question: Can you program your VCR?

Paul A. Samuelson, 1970 Nobel Prize in Economics: "You happen to be talking to an idiot who literally receives instructions from two-and-a-half-year-old grandchildren on...taping things. Now, the two-and-a-half-year-old among the grandchildren cannot program the VCR so that next Thursday it will know to record, but they can do most of the things which I still am not very good at—I've tried."

Val L. Fitch, 1980 Nobel Prize in Physics: "What do you mean? Of course—why not?"

Melvin Calvin, 1961 Nobel Prize in Chemistry: "Videocassette recorder? I think there is one....In fact, I know there is. I got it because my children wanted it, I guess. I just don't remember."

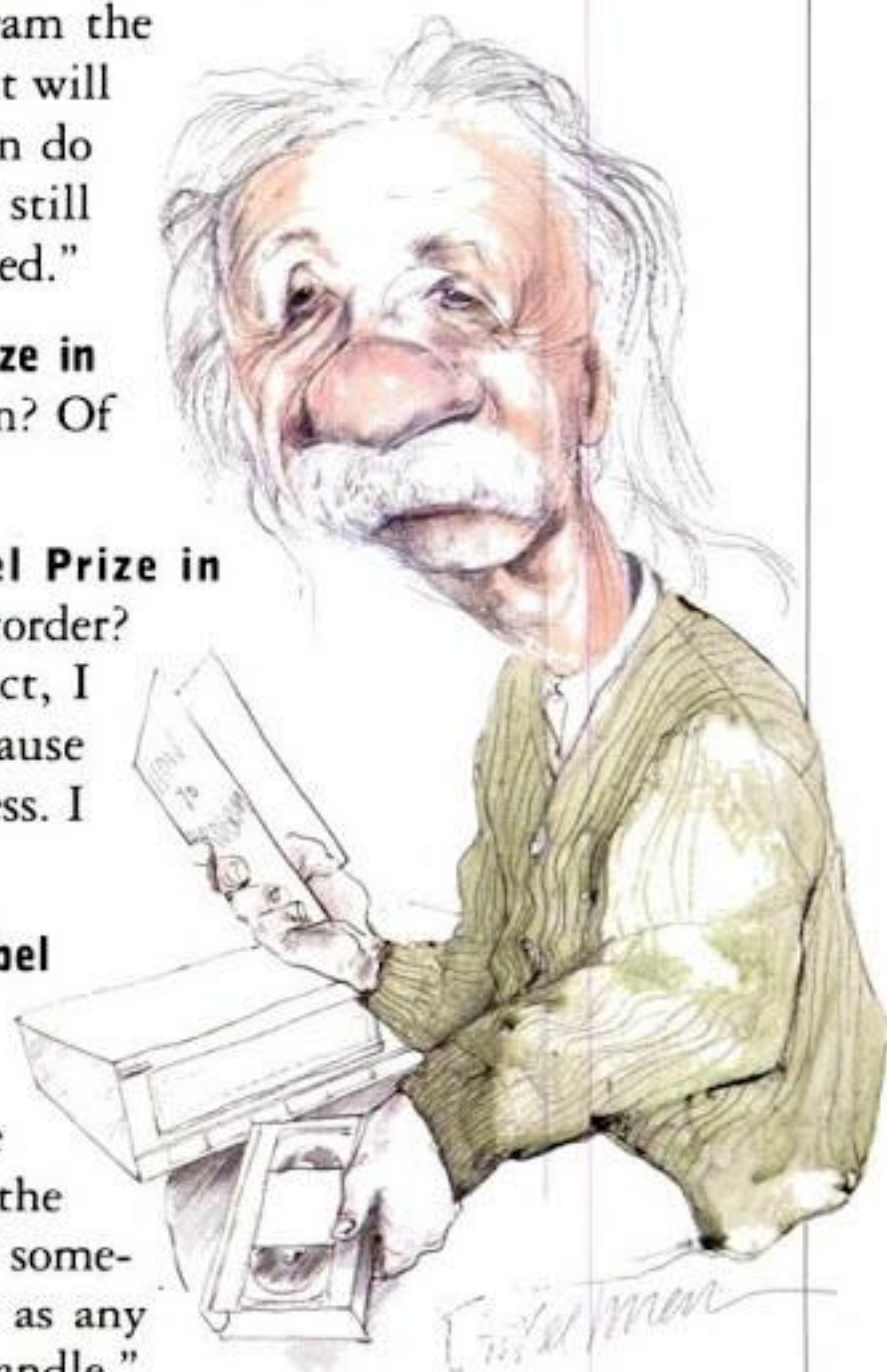
Richard E. Taylor, 1990 Nobel Prize in Physics: "Yes, [but] I don't always win. Sometimes the clock's five minutes wrong and I miss the beginning of the program or something, but I don't regard it as any sort of infernal beast I can't handle."

Herbert C. Brown, 1979 Nobel Prize in Chemistry: "Yes, but I rarely do it, because there's enough things that I want to see that I don't have time to play back. I'm very busy, and I hate to waste time going through these instructions and setting these things. It's not lack of ability, it's just a matter of time."

Donald J. Cram, 1987 Nobel Prize in Chemistry: "I don't have the patience....I could do it, but it would just take more time than I'd want. I haven't even opened the book to read about it. I have a Ph.D. physical organic chemist as a wife, and she's very good at this sort of thing. I'm not sure she really likes it all that much, either...but she does it, and she's good at it."

Leon M. Lederman, 1988 Nobel Prize in Physics: "No, but my wife does. And since she does, I didn't have to learn....She's good at it—she just looked at the instructions and figured it out. At one point, I think I even made a useful suggestion—maybe it was, 'Plug it into the wall,' or something like that—and then it worked. It doesn't *always* work—once, she ran out of tape. That was something we never understood."

Alfred D. Hershey, 1969 Nobel Prize in Medicine: "Sure, that's easy. [But] my wife can't do it—my wife never learned to open a jar."
—Gregg Stebben

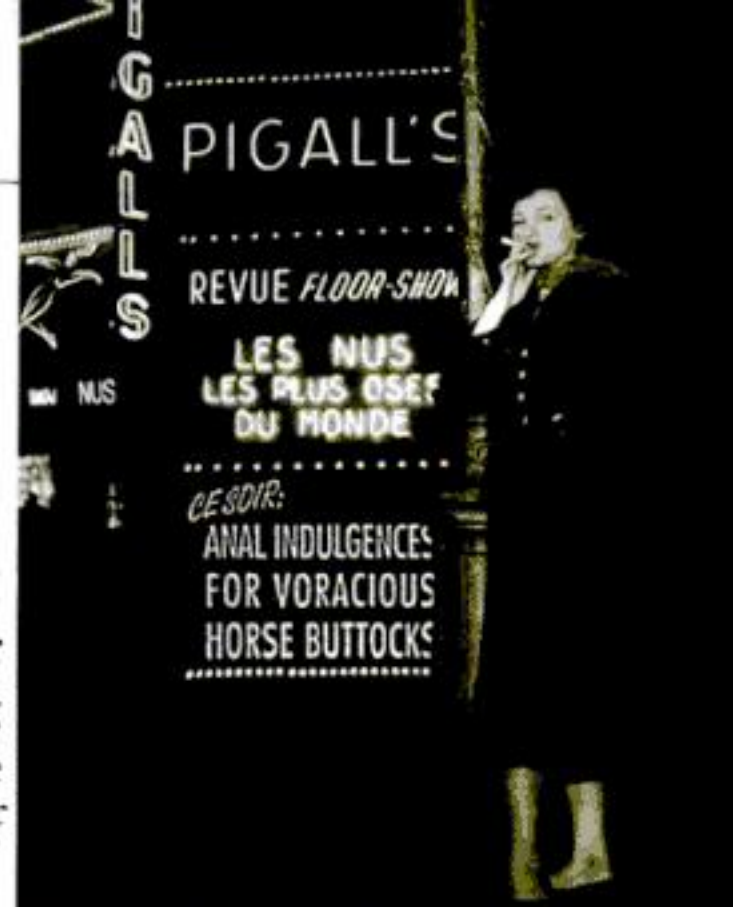


Liberté, Égalité, Sodomie

The French Film Scene Deconstructed

Ah, April in Paris. Paris, City of Light. Beacon of the Enlightenment. Gateway to north-central France. And, of course, international lodestar for connoisseurs of *l'amour*. As a handy reference for Americans traveling abroad this spring, we offer a literal translation of the titles of some of the romantic films playing during a week not long ago in the hometown of Truffaut, Chabrol and Godard:

REMEMBRANCES OF A SMALL OX-RUMP
 ANAL INDULGENCES FOR VORACIOUS HORSE BUTTOCKS
 SODOMIZE ME UP TO THE SWORD HILT
 PIGLIKE LADIES-IN-WAITING WHO ARE EXPERT IN SODOMY
 THE NURSE IS GOOD AT SEX
 SMALL BOURGEOIS HOLES TO BE DEFLOWERED
 SWEET FELLATIONS AND ANAL EXCAVATIONS



TRENDY SECRETARIES BY DAY, PERVERSE BITCHES BY NIGHT
 HIP YOUNG BOURGEOIS FEMALES, SODOMIZED
 HUMID LIPS
 THE LARGE CUDGEL
 VIRGIN BUTTOCKS TO BE TESTED IN THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS
 THE LARGE POMPOUS FEMALES
 THE LARGE VICIOUS FEMALES
 ANAL ENJOYMENTS FOR FEMALE ADOLESCENTS IN HEAT
 VOLUPTUOUSNESSES FOR INSATIABLE BITCHES
 SODOMISTIC CAPRICES FOR BITCHES OF PLEASURE
 THE LADY DOCTOR HAS LARGE BREASTS

—Ted Widmer

I Brake for Self-important Jerks

It takes a special kind of hubris to think one needs vanity license plates. Not coincidentally, it takes very much the same sort of hubris to thrive in the entertainment industry. Indeed, this happy confluence accounts for the abundant and especially awful nature of vanity plates in southern California—thus, in *Grand Canyon*, Steve Martin's producer character has a plate reading GRSS PTS. Here is a sampling of real-life show-business-specific plates spotted during just a few recent weeks' commuting between Venice and Burbank.

I DIRECT
ROLL EM
TV BABY
LAFF BIZZ
(on a car full of cigar-smoking septuagenarians)
AN ACTOR
SN ON TV
FX BIZ
VIDEO VXN
DP *(short for "director of photography")*
RAW STOK
A WRITER
SCRPT DR
SCPT DOC
BDY DBLE
MKUP FX
EDIT FILM
SEARCHED FOR BUT NOT YET SPOTTED:
D GIRL
10 PCT
ARSENIO

—Bruce Handy



"IT'S A MOVIE ABOUT TEENAGE BLACK GANGS WHO GET INTO FIGHTS WHEN THEY GO TO MOVIES ABOUT TEENAGE BLACK GANGS."

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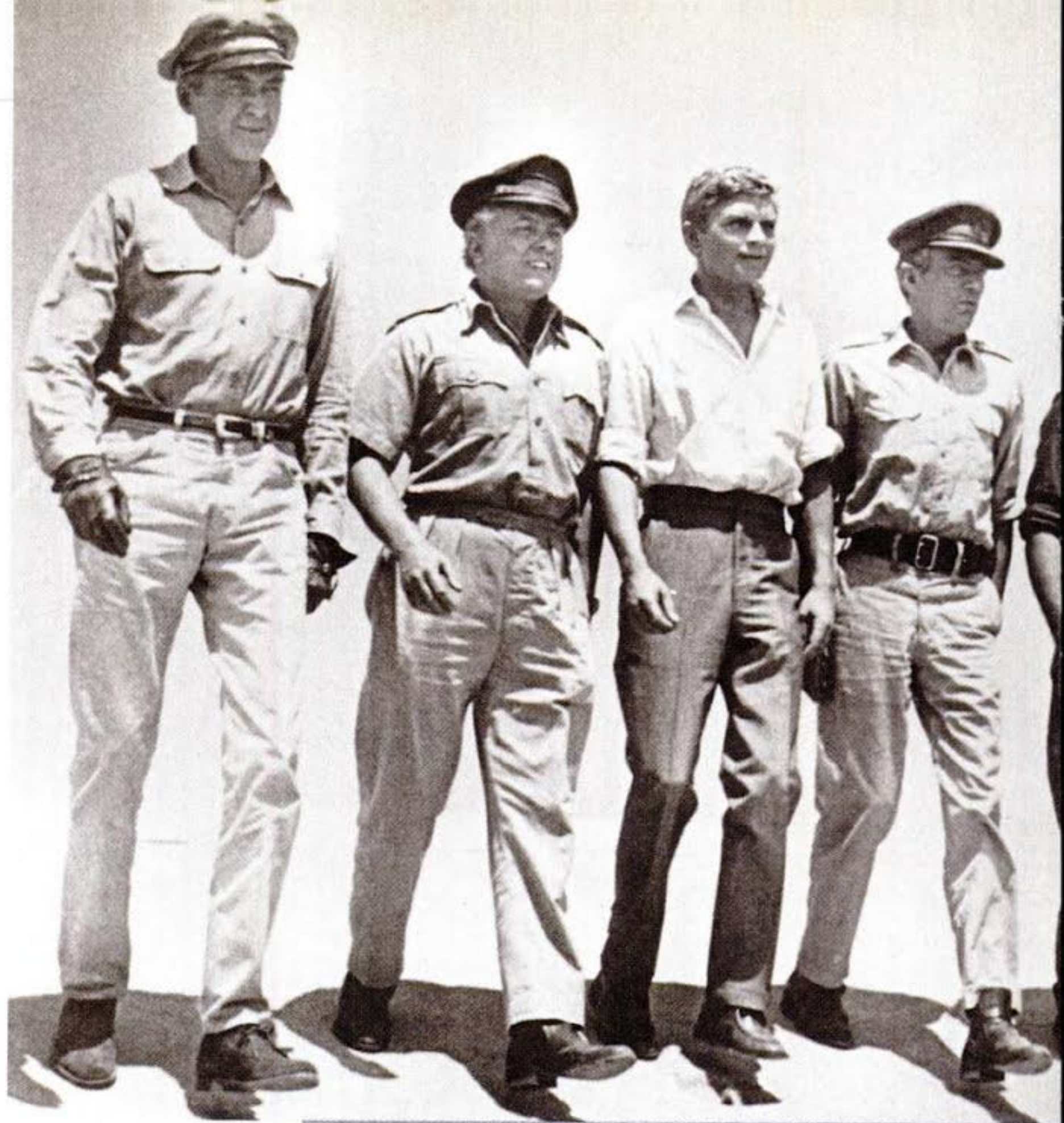
Sweaty-guy shots (see cover) are a *bipartisan* spectacle: Coffee, a phone, and Bill Clinton can campaign *anywhere, anytime*.

SPY BIG PICTURES



A penitent in the chic resort town of Phuket, Thailand, carries ten pineapples on a holy needle as a demonstration of his ability to withstand pain; *right*, an Indian sadhu midway through a several-hour-long meditation with his head underground.





Highly synchronized *Flight of the Phoenix* (1965) cast takes a break. *From left*, Jimmy Stewart, Richard Attenborough, Hardy Kruger, Peter Finch, Ernest Borgnine, Dan Duryea, Christian Marquand, George Kennedy and six other prominent grown-ups.



SPY BIG PICTURES



Yenta-to-the-free-world
Queen Elizabeth II
rearranges actual world
leaders at a NATO-
summit photo session.



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- ☐ Deduct cost of hobby even if you never show a profit
- ☐ Painkillers that make your headache worse

- ☐ Costs not covered by health insurance contract can be covered if you know the ropes
- ☐ How to deduct all your medical bills *without* first subtracting 7.5% of gross income. Lots of people do it and never get in trouble. What's more, their ploy is perfectly legal

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Two famous cold remedies that make you sicker if taken together

- ☐ Outwit mugger in self-service elevator
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- ☐ Numbers that should never be used for combination lock. (Professional burglars try them first.)
- ☐ What never to tell an insurance adjuster. First thing said after loss can be worst mistake
- ☐ Stop a headache by pressing secret spot on arm
- ☐ Best times to get standby seat on any airline
- ☐ How to check in and out of crowded hotel without standing in line
- ☐ What surgeons don't tell you

Where to hide valuables in hotel room

- ☐ What you don't have to tell a tax auditor. How to prevent a "fishing" expedition through your records
- ☐ How to get discounts at stores that say they don't give any
- ☐ How to choose the right vacation cruise. Best cabins on any ship if you don't want to be seasick
- ☐ Wife deeds assets over to dying husband. This is estate planning at its shrewdest
- ☐ Credit card that starts charging interest before you even get your bill

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JERRY GOES TO

DEATH CAMP!

TO ARTISTS AND INTELLECTUALS, the twentieth century has posed no questions more vexing than these: First, can art make sense of the Holocaust? And second, why do the French love Jerry Lewis?

The first question can't really be answered, at least not in the space allotted here. As for the second, it's my own opinion that the French have confused sloppy, uneven filmmaking with Godardian antiformalism. Regardless, raising these two issues on the same page is not just a pointless exercise in non sequitur. Because Jerry Lewis, like Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi before him—not to mention the producers of the NBC miniseries *Holocaust*—has transformed the incomprehensible into art.

He did this two decades ago, in 1972, a year of cultural ferment that also saw a black man, Sammy Davis Jr., snuggle Richard Nixon on national television. It was Lewis's 41st film (but his first to deal with the mass destruction of European Jewry), and it turned out to be the most notorious cinematic miscue in history—unfinished,

HOW JERRY LEWIS—
NOT JOHN WATERS—MADE
THE WORLD'S FIRST MOVIE
ABOUT A CLOWN IN AUSCHWITZ!
WHY YOU'LL NEVER SEE IT!
PLUS, THE NEXT BEST THING—
OUR EXCLUSIVE RE-CREATION!

"I was terrified
of directing the last
scene," Lewis told
The New York Times.
But "suddenly the
children were all around
me....I thought, 'This
is what my whole life
has been leading to.'"

by Bruce Handy

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DREW FRIEDMAN



Showers

unreleased, said by the few who've seen it to be almost unwatchable. Oh, there are also Von Stroheim's *Queen Kelly* and Welles's *Don Quixote*, among other busts. But no other film, seen or unseen, can boast both Nazi death camps and the auteur responsible for *The Nutty Professor*.

There is only one *The Day the Clown Cried*.

Were it ever released, the film would surely provoke as great a stir as a rediscovered Balanchine ballet or an unearthed Van Gogh—if not on the pages of the Arts & Leisure section, then at least among scores of sitcom writers, apprentice film editors, clerks in comic-book stores and others who are expected to wear high-top sneakers to work and whose fascination with Jerry Lewis transcends easy irony. But so far *The Day the Clown Cried* hasn't surfaced, and it likely never will. Only a handful of people have ever seen it. And as they grow older...

To preserve their memories for future generations, SPY has tracked down and recorded the impressions of eight people who have seen *The Day the Clown Cried* or who participated in its creation. You and I may never watch in mute wonderment as the lost gem lights up the screen before us, but now, at least, we can know what it felt like for those who were *there*. But first, the back story.

IT SOUNDS LIKE A PUNCH LINE IN AN OVERHEATED Hollywood satire: Jerry Lewis in Auschwitz. Depending on your taste, the prospect may be as offensive or as

he has called "the beady-eyed lunatic with the comic mustache who had started it all." Lewis's concern was whether *The Day the Clown Cried* was a proper Jerry Lewis vehicle. In *Jerry Lewis in Person*, his 1982 autobiography, he recounts his reaction to the producer, Nathan Wachsberger, who asked him to play the part in 1971:

"Why don't you try getting Sir Laurence Olivier? I mean, he doesn't find it too difficult to choke to death playing Hamlet. My bag is comedy, Mr. Wachsberger, and you're asking me if I'm prepared to deliver helpless kids into a gas chamber. Ho-ho. Some laugh—how do I pull it off?"

He shrugged and sat back.

After a long moment of silence I picked up the script.

"What a horror...It must be told." [Ellipsis Lewis's.]

The script had actually been written ten years earlier by Joan O'Brien and Charles Denton (she was a former PR woman who created the John Forsythe TV series *To Rome With Love*; he was a TV critic for the *Los Angeles Examiner*). Like a lot of screenplays, *The Day the Clown Cried* was optioned by a string of producers; unlike a lot of screenplays, it attracted the attention of Milton Berle, Dick Van Dyke and Bobby Darin—any one of whom would have no doubt been as capable as Jerry Lewis of playing the title role with finesse and taste. But it was Lewis, finally, around whom the requisite financing coalesced, and he took his responsibility to heart: "I

BEFORE JERRY LEWIS WAS INTERESTED, *THE DAY THE CLOWN CRIED* ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF

intriguing as...well, truly, no metaphor measures up to the particulars. A synopsis:

An unhappy German circus clown is sent to a concentration camp and forced to become a sort of genocidal Pied Piper, entertaining Jewish children as he leads them to the gas chambers. The story is meant to be played as drama. By all accounts, no one sings "You'll Never Walk Alone," and Tony Orlando does not appear.

The Day the Clown Cried was to be Lewis's first serious film as both director and star, a proto-*Interiors*, "a turning point in the career of one of the most unusual performers in history," as the movie's press kit put it, adding that Lewis is "a 20th Century...phenomenon like atomic energy, moon shot, heart transplants and hippies...." Nevertheless, many in Hollywood were skeptical about the project. Many outside Hollywood were skeptical, too. Even French film critics were skeptical. As Jean-Pierre Coursodon would write a few years later in *Film Comment*, "While it is not surprising that Lewis should come round to disclose a fondness for pathos shared by so many comedians (there had been warning hints in his earlier pictures), his selection of such a painfully bizarre theme does come as a bit of a shock."

Lewis himself was skeptical when he first read the script, though not about the material itself. Moved, he found the screenplay to be a devastating indictment of the Nazi atrocities, not to mention the midcentury leader

thought *The Day the Clown Cried* would be a way to show we don't have to tremble and give up in the darkness," he wrote. "[The clown] would teach us this lesson."

Lewis plunged into preproduction with the rigor of a Streep or a De Niro, touring Dachau and Auschwitz and losing 35 pounds on a grapefruit diet. He rewrote the script, changing the protagonist's name from Karl Schmidt to the more distinctive—and more Jerry-Lewis-movie-like—Helmut Doork. With Wachsberger providing the financing (his other efforts include *They Came to Rob Las Vegas*), and with Lewis as both star and director, *The Day the Clown Cried* began shooting in 1972 in Paris, moving on to Stockholm, where most of the film was shot. Lewis's costars included the Swedish actress Harriet Andersson, who had been directed by Ingmar Bergman in *Smiles of a Summer Night*; the German actor Anton Diffring, who specialized in playing very bad Nazis; and a bunch of unwitting Swedish children. "An International Cast!" the ads might have trumpeted.

It's not easy to get specific details about what happened on a film set 20 years ago in Sweden when the producer is dead and the director-star refuses to be interviewed. Nevertheless, it seems safe to say that something went terribly wrong on the set of *The Day the Clown Cried*. By Lewis's account, Wachsberger took off to the south of France before the first day of shooting, the promised financing dried up shortly thereafter, and Lewis

began spending his own money. Before the shoot had wrapped, he told *Variety* that he had temporarily shut down the production. He also denounced Wachsberger, who promptly filed suit, claiming breach of contract.

These contretemps alone would have been enough to doom the project, and screenwriters O'Brien and Denton were distressed to read about them in the trades, though they were even more distressed that neither Lewis nor Wachsberger owned the legal right to be shooting their script in the first place: According to the screenwriters, Wachsberger's option had run out before filming began. "Jerry knew the option had expired," says O'Brien today. "But he decided to go ahead with it."

Lewis endured, sinking his own wealth (not easily renewable at that point in his career) into the filming of a property he didn't own, on the assumption that audiences who had loved him imitating retards would now want to see him escorting children to their death. To make matters even more Coppola-esque, Lewis's health was bad, and he had, he would later admit, a debilitating addiction to Percodan. "I think sometimes it's difficult to be a director *and* [the star]," says Harriet Andersson, who is somewhat philosophical about her *Day the Clown Cried* experience. Sven Lindberg, a Swedish actor who played a Nazi, remembers Lewis as "nervous" and

MILTON BERLE, DICK VAN DYKE AND BOBBY DARIN

preoccupied by his money troubles: "It was clear he was not in good order those months here in Sweden."

"I almost had a heart attack," Lewis told *The New York Times* shortly after finishing the shoot. "Maybe I'd have survived. Just. But if that picture had been left incomplete, it would have very nearly killed me.... The suffering, the hell I went through with Wachsberger had one advantage. I put all the pain on the screen." Whether or not you believe that the pain incurred in dealing with an undercapitalized motion-picture producer is translatable into the pain incurred at Auschwitz, you have to admire Lewis's dedication (to use a nonclinical term) and rue the fact that no documentary film crew was on hand to capture *The Making of "The Day the Clown Cried."*

"I was terrified of directing the last scene," Lewis told the *Times*. "I had been 113 days on the picture, with only three hours of sleep a night.... I was exhausted, beaten. When I thought of doing that scene, I was paralyzed.... I stood there in my clown's costume, with the cameras ready. Suddenly the children were all around me, unasked, undirected, and they clung to my arms and legs, they looked up at me so trustingly. I felt love pouring out of me. I thought, 'This is what my whole life has been leading to.' I thought what the clown thought. I forgot about trying to direct. I had the cameras turn and I began to walk, with the children clinging to me, singing, into the gas ovens. And the door closed behind us."

IT MUST BE TOLD. ALAS, IT WILL ALMOST SURELY NEVER BE seen. *The Day the Clown Cried* is probably lost forever. It has been left unfinished, never having made it beyond a rough cut. The production's irregularities left the question of rights in a snarl: Claiming that it is owed more than \$600,000, the studio in Stockholm has held on to the negative; the screenwriters own the copyright. Over the years, investors—Europeans, *bien sûr*—have tried to put together a deal to finish and release the movie. O'Brien says she and Denton won't allow it. And there the matter rests.

But what about the *work*?

Lewis has a copy of the rough cut on videotape. He reportedly keeps it in his office, protected from harm and



Wild Goose-Stepping! Helmut imitates the person Jerry calls "the beady-eyed lunatic with the comic mustache who had started it all."

unclassiness by a Louis Vuitton briefcase. Over the years, he has screened it—or pieces of it—for a number of colleagues and at least one journalist. Attempting to piece together the lost work, SPY interviewed eight of these lucky people. Their impressions have been edited together to create a kind of roundtable discussion.

So dim the lights and sit back with a bowl of popcorn. As critic Jean-Pierre Coursodon—*French* critic Jean-Pierre Coursodon—points out, "Although the odds against it are staggering, it *might* turn out to be sublime."

THE "PANELISTS":

HARRIET ANDERSSON is considered a national treasure in Sweden. She refers to her director on *The Day the Clown Cried* as "Yerry" Lewis.

CHARLES DENTON and JOAN O'BRIEN, the screenwriters, were shown selected scenes by Lewis shortly after shooting was completed in 1972.

LYNN HIRSCHBERG interviewed Lewis for *Rolling Stone* in 1982. He showed her the movie's climactic scenes.

SVEN LINDBERG claims that his many Swedish films are unknown to American audiences. He pronounces his *j*'s in the Anglophone manner.

JOSHUA WHITE, a television director, directed *The Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon* in 1979. At the time, he had an opportunity to screen the entire *Clown* rough cut. He watched it with HARRY SHEARER, actor, writer, SPY contributor and *Telethon* connoisseur.

JIM WRIGHT is a producer who used to be on Lewis's

drastically wrong, its pathos and its comedy are so wildly misplaced, that you could not, in your fantasy of what it might be like, improve on what it really is. *Oh, my God!*—that's all you can say.

Can you compare it with anything else Lewis has done?

SHEARER: The only thing in Jerry's oeuvre that really is like it is a wonderful thing that he did early on in the telethon. It was a dramatic tape of an L.A. actor who hosted the *Popeye* show, and Jerry shot it. The guy plays Muscular Dystrophy. It's a staged reading: [*scary voice*] "*I am Muscular Dystrophy, and I hate people, especially children. I love to make their limbs shrivel up!*" They showed this for several years before cooler heads prevailed. In its sense of misplaced dramaturgy it was the closest I ever came to

seeing anything that would be a real precursor to the clown movie.

Ms. O'Brien, what was the genesis of the screenplay?

O'BRIEN: After the war was over, when I heard what had happened in Germany, I was so ridden with guilt. And when I heard that children were put in these things, it just practically blew my mind. And then years go by, and I'm doing PR for Emmett Kelly, and Emmett said to me, "A clown doesn't play to the adults. The

"THE HELL I WENT THROUGH WITH

only audience that matters to him is children." I put these two things together.

Clowns and concentration camps. Can you give a synopsis?

JIM WRIGHT: Helmut is a clown who's really a bastard.

O'BRIEN: He uses people. He gets his girlfriend to talk to the owners of the circus he works at to try and make him the first clown. Of course,

they can't, because he's terrible. So he gets mad, and he goes out and gets drunk, and he does these imitations of Hitler.

WRIGHT: He talks about how nobody likes to laugh anymore because of all this *Heil Hitler* stuff. And he's so drunk when he's made a salute that he just falls flat on the floor, and we pan back and see these shiny boots right at his head. And we pull back, and we're in an interrogating office.

O'BRIEN: He tells on everybody he ever knew, whether he ever felt they were anti-Hitler or not. He's just trying to save his own skin. And even in prison he's a nothing.

WRIGHT: He's put in political prison. They put barbed wire between the Jewish prisoners and the political prisoners [Helmut is not Jewish]. And all this time, he's always bragging about what a great clown he was.



"I am a clown!" Helmut learns that Jewish children imprisoned in Auschwitz aren't as choosy as the audiences back home.

staff. Although Wright first brought the script to Lewis's attention in the mid-1960s and has since had an option on it himself, he was not involved in Lewis's production. Despite his reservations about Lewis's version, he says that if he could get financing with Lewis as a principal, he would happily recast him: "That man is very talented. He can do anything."

SPY: What was it like seeing *The Day the Clown Cried*?

JOAN O'BRIEN: It was a disaster. Just talking about it makes me very emotional.... [*Her voice trails off.*]

HARRY SHEARER: With most of these kinds of things, you find that the anticipation, or the concept, is better than the thing itself. But seeing this film was really awe-inspiring, in that you are rarely in the presence of a perfect object. This was a perfect object. This movie is so

O'BRIEN: [The political prisoners] keep saying, "Do a routine... Give us something to laugh at." Of course, he can't, because he knows they won't laugh at him.

WRIGHT: So they give him a big push, and he falls into the mud. He's pounding on the ground, saying, "I *am* a clown, I *am* a clown!" And we hear laughter, and behind the barbed wire is this little Jewish girl and her brother.

O'BRIEN: They thought the slip was funny. Helmut doesn't know whether they're laughing at him or with him. So he picks up a little mud and puts it on his nose. Then they really start to laugh. More children come to the fence. Helmut gets up and says to the other inmates, "Look—they're laughing at me! I *am* a great clown!"

It's a moment of exaltation, sort of like when the ape throws the bone in the air in 2001?

O'BRIEN: From then on, he just thinks about the kids.

WRIGHT: He uses soot from the stove to give him a little bit of makeup, and some pigeon droppings for the white. He trades his food for a big man's shoes and coat, and he starts really performing for these kids.

O'BRIEN: The commandant lets him for a while but then says, "This has got to stop." One day Helmut goes out and there are no children. They've been loaded on a boxcar to be taken to Auschwitz. But townspeople near the boxcar are starting to say, "Why are there children in there?" So the commandant puts Helmut on the boxcar to keep the kids quiet. But through a little

And it was such a long time ago.

What is Helmut's actual clowning like?

LYNN HIRSCHBERG: Tripping, pratfalls, typical Jerry stuff. That grotesque spastic stuff that he does.

WHITE: He does these bad silent routines and they're intercut with these shots of blond, blue-eyed, obviously Scandinavian kids laughing in bleachers.

How did Jerry deal with the more dramatic demands?

WHITE: The scenes were *so* dramatic—it was, after all, set in a concentration camp—that they were beyond his range. Other comedians who have a similar problem handle themselves better; they position themselves so that other actors take the focus in a dramatic scene. But Jerry would point the camera on himself and then attempt to be in this deep dramatic moment in which the Holocaust was playing out right in front of him.

Any specific memories—eye-rolling, teeth-gnashing?

WHITE: I just remember rage. He played this rage because that's what he was filled with then. He never really commits to the character. He's always just Jerry. He's supposed to be this schlump, but he's got this slicked-back hair. He's practically wearing the pinkie ring.

He literally has slicked-back hair?

WHITE: Yes.

CHARLES DENTON: In one scene Jerry is lying in his bunk wearing a pair of brand-new shoes after theoretically having been in a concentration camp for four or five

THE PRODUCER] HAD ONE ADVANTAGE," JERRY SAID. "I PUT ALL THE PAIN ON THE SCREEN."

mishap, the car pulls away, and Helmut's on it.

So he ends up at Auschwitz.

WRIGHT: They're going to use him as a Judas goat to take the kids to the gas chamber and keep them from being frightened. Of course, the children don't know it's a gas chamber—they think it's the showers.

O'BRIEN: This is not a great hero. He stands at the door and lets the children go in. But there's one little girl who hesitates and holds her hand out to Helmut. He is shaken. And then he looks at all those little faces looking up, waiting for him to do something funny. And so he pulls a stale piece of bread from his pocket and starts throwing it in the air and trying to catch it in his mouth—fairly stupid stuff. And that's the end.

WRIGHT: Even at the end, you don't know whether he did it for the kids or he did it for his own ego.

So that's the original screenplay. Lewis altered it, right?

WRIGHT: Jerry completely changed the clown. Instead of being an egotistical clown, Jerry more or less is like an Emmett Kelly, a very sad clown. You feel sorry for him.

JOSHUA WHITE: It's the clown as the one really miserable person. It's Jerry's idea of pathos—it's not particularly original, but he really thinks in those simplistic terms.

Ms. Andersson, do you remember any of your scenes?

HARRIET ANDERSSON: We were in a kitchen or something. I'm sorry, it's just a little confusing because I felt there... It was something wrong with it, in a way.

years. I think he also has a shot of the prisoners where all the women were in Sunday outfits.

The mise-en-scène was problematic?

WHITE: It was filmed under very difficult conditions, and it shows. It almost looks like a student film. It's supposed to be Auschwitz, and it's completely underpopulated. There are all kinds of art-direction conceits, like, "We'll just play it against black, and it will look like he's in the middle of the ring." It's hopeless.

Can you see the influence of any European directors?

SHEARER: The only European influence I can see is that of Paris street mimes. It really is that level of [*turns head sideways and makes contorted, maudlin clown face*].

Ms. Andersson, you've worked with Bergman and Jerry Lewis. Any similarities?

ANDERSSON: I never compare my directors. I don't think that's fair.

SVEN LINDBERG: All directors direct. They *are* the same. But this one, Jerry Lewis, was more pressed in some ways. I was never troubled with the work—I thought it was good—but he was so nervous always.

How are the Nazis portrayed in the film?

SHEARER: They're evil incarnate. There's no shading.

WHITE: Anton Diffring, this hammy German actor, plays the main Nazi. You can tell he was embarrassed. The performance was right out of *Hogan's Heroes*.

How does Jerry play the final scene?

HIRSCHBERG: It's very Pied Piper-ish. There are like 10, 15 children. They're like seven or eight years old. Helmut rounds them up. They're in a yard. He takes them off to the showers-slash-ovens: "Where are we going, Helmut? Where are we going?" He's telling jokes and stories to the kids and singing songs. He does a lot of Jerry shtick—you're supposed to laugh at his routines yet be appalled by the horror. The children are cheerful because he's Helmut the Great. Meanwhile, of course, he's terribly sad. Because he has a sad thing to do. But he's smiling behind his tears, because he's trying to embrace the children. They're

tugging at his clothes. Now he's standing in front of the oven. The children just march in a door. It hasn't been turned on yet. You can still hear them laughing inside. And then he sort of stands there and looks in and stands there on the outside and starts to cry. One tear rolls down the clown makeup—they make an art-direction point of it. And then he goes in himself....

Can you describe your sensations as you watched this?

HIRSCHBERG: I was appalled. I couldn't understand it. It's beyond normal computation. You look at it and think, *What must he have been thinking when he did it, thought about doing it, thought it was good?*

SHEARER: I think Jerry probably thought, *The Academy can't ignore this.*

WHITE: It's an idea that defeated itself. For the movie to have a center, for it to work, you had to feel for this clown. And he's not funny, and he's not articulate, and he's not nice. And then the fact that this character is placed anywhere near a concentration camp where children are being killed...He's trying to create a tragic character, and instead he creates a pathetic character.

SHEARER: The closest I can come to describing the effect is if you flew down to Tijuana and suddenly saw a painting on black velvet of Auschwitz. You'd just think, *My God, wait a minute!* It's not funny, and it's not good, and somebody's trying so hard in the wrong way to convey this strongly held feeling.

LINDBERG: My impression was that it was very serious

for him to do this, because he's a Jew. He thought this film would explain something about the horror of the Jews.

HIRSCHBERG: He's very proud of it. He asked, "What do you think?" Usually I would lie and say it was great. But I said, "I just don't get it." And he got really cold.

WHITE: When I saw it, I felt for him, because I could see him trying to clear the hypocrisy out of his life. He was always surrounded by sycophants, but he'd just gotten off Percodan, and he was very proud of that. Then to see this film that was so important to him and that was almost

incompetent was just sad. He felt the world had conspired against him to prevent him from completing it. He endowed it with great sadness. It was "the lost film." But it is so awful—you can't even laugh at it. It's so hopeless, you just don't feel anything good for Jerry.

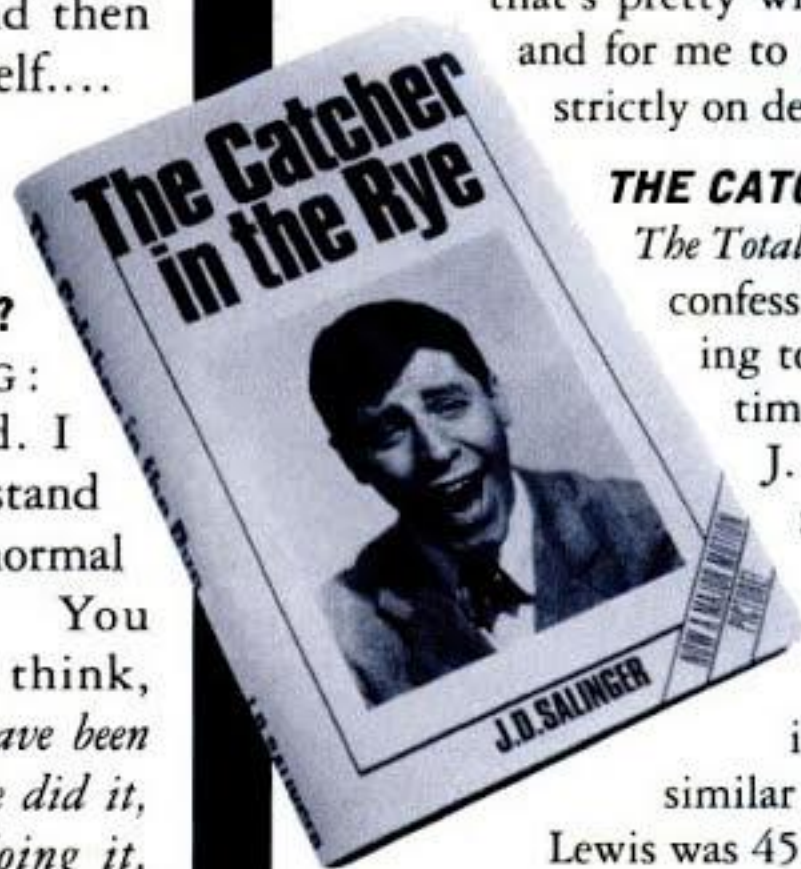
WRIGHT: I know Jerry could do a tremendous job with it if he'd do the script the way it was written, and I think he would now. I think he'd do anything to do it again.


LINDBERG: I feel sorrow for Jerry that everything was spoiled. We were so sad, we Swedish actors, when we heard that this film would not be shown. We did our best.

THE DAY THE CLOWN WENT INTO TURNAROUND TWO OTHER JERRY LEWIS MASTERPIECES YOU'LL NEVER SEE

WOODY ALLEN FALL PROJECT, 1966: In 1966, Lewis told *Cahiers du Cinema* that he was planning to direct—but not act in—a movie written by and starring Woody Allen: "It's hysterical. The character Allen plays is insane. If I can just capture it on the screen. His name is Salmon Winkelman. And when he's asked why, he says because his mother gave birth to him in the canned-goods department of the supermarket....I mean that's pretty wild comedy. He writes marvelously, and for me to get my teeth into it and concentrate strictly on design—you can imagine."

THE CATCHER IN THE RYE: In his 1971 book *The Total Filmmaker*, Lewis makes this startling confession: "I have been in the throes of trying to buy *The Catcher in the Rye* for a long time. What's the problem? The author, J. D. Salinger! He doesn't want more money. He just doesn't even want to discuss it....Why do I want it? I think I'm the Jewish Holden Caulfield. I'd love to play it!...Additionally, Salinger and I had similar backgrounds and there is empathy." Lewis was 45 at the time. —B.H.



"ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, I'LL GET IT DONE," JERRY LEWIS vows in his autobiography. "The picture must be seen, and if by no one else, at least by every kid in the world who's only heard there was such a thing as the Holocaust." Last year a group of producers, including Jim Wright, announced they had struck a deal to coproduce a whole new version of *The Day the Clown Cried* with a studio in what was then the Soviet Union. There have been...*complications*. But the producers continue to hope that the film will get made, in one country or another. "It's a subject matter that *has* to be done," says Wright, echoing Lewis's concern that without *The Day the Clown Cried*, future generations may not be properly aware of the Holocaust. The script is said to be in the hands of Robin Williams. 

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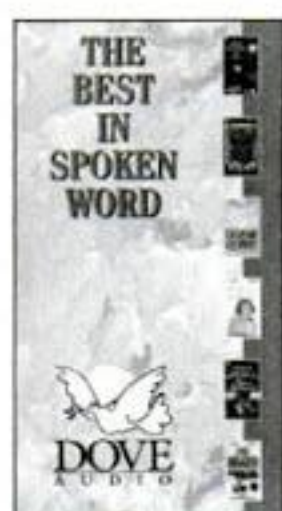
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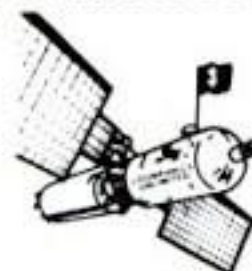


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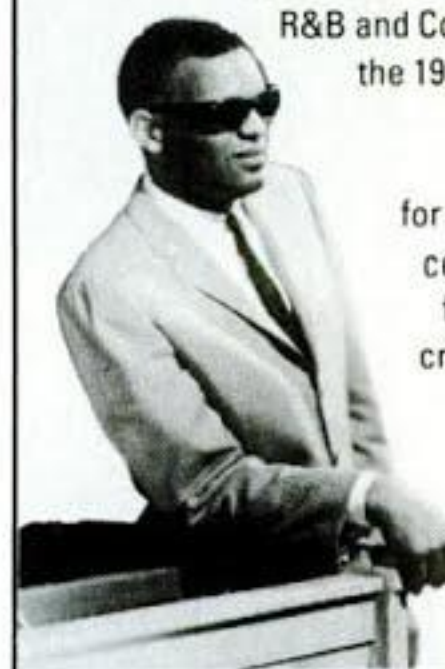
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ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN KRONINGER

Shame & Fortune

FINANCIALLY EMBARRASSED IS SUPPOSED TO MEAN "BROKE," BUT FOR SOME OF THE VERY RICH—THE KOTEX HEIR, FOR EXAMPLE, AND THE EX-LAX HEIR, AND CHEVY CHASE, THE CRANE-URINALS HEIR—IT HAS A DIFFERENT MEANING ENTIRELY

TEXAS FORTUNES—like all things in Texas—are vast, but none come larger than the pile the Bass family sits atop. Perry Bass and his sons, Sid, Edward, Robert and Lee, control an empire worth an estimated \$6.3 billion, but they are not your typical Texas plutocrats. They like to think of themselves as decorous and cosmopolitan, far removed from the gold-Cadillac-driving real-life Ewings who have made *Texas rich* synonymous with profligate yahoodom. The Basses have given tens of millions of dollars to Yale. They buy modern paintings. They yacht. Of course, everyone knows they made their money from oil and very canny investments in companies such as Disney (in which they have a \$2.5 billion stake), and these respectable, blue-chip sources of wealth are essential to the family's self-consciously patrician image. Such holdings reinforce their image in a way that a fortune based, say, on the boiled bones and fat of slaughtered cows would not. Few know, however, that the Basses are among the principal owners of Darling-Delaware Co. of Dallas, the largest rendering company in the United States. In other words, when New York socialite Mercedes Kellogg lured soft-spoken Sid Bass away from his wife and married him, she landed the Offal King.

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stud-chicken tycoon

DAVID ROCKEFELLER JR.
stud-chicken tycoon

RODMAN ROCKEFELLER
stud-chicken tycoon

MARSHALL COGAN
felt tycoon

ANNE MARION
Radio Shack heiress

PHILIP NIARCHOS
same-industry-as-Aristotle-
Onassis heir

WILLIAM PALEY
I Love Lucy tycoon (deceased)

HOW THE EMBARRASSED RICH HOPE THE PAPERS WILL DESCRIBE THEM

"investor"

"businessman"

"legitimate businessman" ➤

Americans don't share the English landed gentry's time-honored—and by now pretty vestigial—disdain for "trade money." But even in this country, all money is not created equal, and the question "How much money have they got?" has barely been answered before the question "Where does their money come from?" has been asked. Sometimes the response is the wrong one. Do tallow barons ever boast about the basis of their fortunes? Probably not, and suspiciously, the National Renderers Association declined to give this reporter a list of its members. Adult-diaper heirs and toilet-bowl-cleanser magnates all face the same problem—they are very rich, but the source of their wealth is very unclassy. They bear capitalism's most peculiar, although not necessarily most heartrending, burden: the Embarrassing Fortune.

Anyone unlucky enough to have an embarrassing fortune must somehow conceal it or transform it into something unembarrassing. This is crucial: Regardless of how elegant and refined you may be, when the world discovers that your Rothkos and Queen Anne highboys were paid for with money made in crematoriums, you just won't seem quite so impressive. In *This Side of Paradise*, F. Scott Fitzgerald provided an exquisite example of such deflation:

Dick Humbird had, ever since freshman year, seemed to Amory a perfect type of aristocrat. He was slender but well-built—black curly hair, straight features, and rather a dark skin. Everything he said sounded intangibly appropriate. He possessed infinite courage, an averagely good mind, and a sense of honor with a clear charm and *noblesse oblige* that varied it from righteousness. He could dissipate without going to pieces.... Servants worshipped him and treated him like a god....

"Well," Alec had [said], "if you want to know the shocking truth, his father was a grocery clerk who made a fortune in Tacoma real estate and came to New York ten years ago."

Amory had felt a curious sinking sensation.

Fortunately, like so many of those who suffer from alcoholism or dyslexia, any number of the embarrassed rich have learned to confront their problem and sometimes to overcome it.

LET'S SAY YOU ARE a well-known comic actor; in fact, let's say you are Chevy Chase. How do you handle the fact that you are the Crane-urinal heir? Do you make deadpan, sophomoric jokes about it, in keeping with your general comic style? No. You simply never mention the subject and hope for the best. This is typical of the embarrassed rich. Dana Delany was the very attractive star of *China Beach*; her family has made millions in the toilet-flusher-valve business, but while her personal biography notes that she graduated "in the first co-ed class at the prestigious Andover Academy," it makes no mention of toilet-flusher valves, and at least one close friend was unaware of the toilet-flusher-valve origins of the fortune.

Similarly, Republican Wisconsin congressman F. James Sensenbrenner Jr.—one of the richest men in Congress—neglects to refer to his family background in the biography released by his office. Sensenbrenner is heir to a paper-and-cellulose-manufacturing fortune founded when his great-grandfather invented the Kotex sanitary napkin. Surely it is a matter of public interest that Republican senator John Warner of Virginia made his fortune by marrying and divorcing the right woman—his bank account was stocked with the reported \$7 million settlement he received from his first, pre-Elizabeth Taylor wife, banking heiress Catherine Mellon. Oddly, the fact is nowhere in the biography his office supplied to us.

Where omission fails, euphemism may succeed. That's the recommendation made by New York public-relations specialist Gustavus Ober. Asked how a portable-toilet magnate ready to arrive in the black-tie

set might explain his business interests, Ober is blunt: "I would hide that. Call yourself an industrial engineer or something. You don't have to say, 'Hi. I'm the King of Porta Potti's.' Language is all-encompassing. You can use it to advantage." The actual Porta Potti heirs, the Sargents of Ann Arbor, are said to be socially unambitious. Livia Weintraub, the wife of meat distributor Stanley Weintraub, has shown an instinctive knack for the Ober approach. When Mrs. Weintraub sought membership in a private dining club, her sponsor was asked to note her husband's business on the application form, and she told him, *Don't say "meat," for God's sake. Put down "real estate."*

For politicians, hiding the facts is second nature, so they are skilled at dealing with snigger-worthy wealth. New York state senator Roy Goodman's "Biographical Sketch" boasts that he was for ten years the "President and CEO of an over-the-counter pharmaceutical company." True, but what voter wouldn't have felt more satisfyingly informed if Goodman had explained that the family-owned pharmaceutical business was the Ex-Lax Company? On Capitol Hill, *businessman* is the vague word of choice in personal biographies for senators and representatives who would rather not spell out how they made their money before coming to Washington. "Small businessman" Mike Parker and "lawyer-businessman" Mike Espy, both Mississippi congressmen, owned funeral homes. Representative Richard Ray of Georgia, whose résumé brags that he spent "2 decades as the owner/manager of small businesses," ran his own insect-extermination company. Interestingly, mobsters use a variation on the political euphemism: not "businessman" but "legitimate businessman."

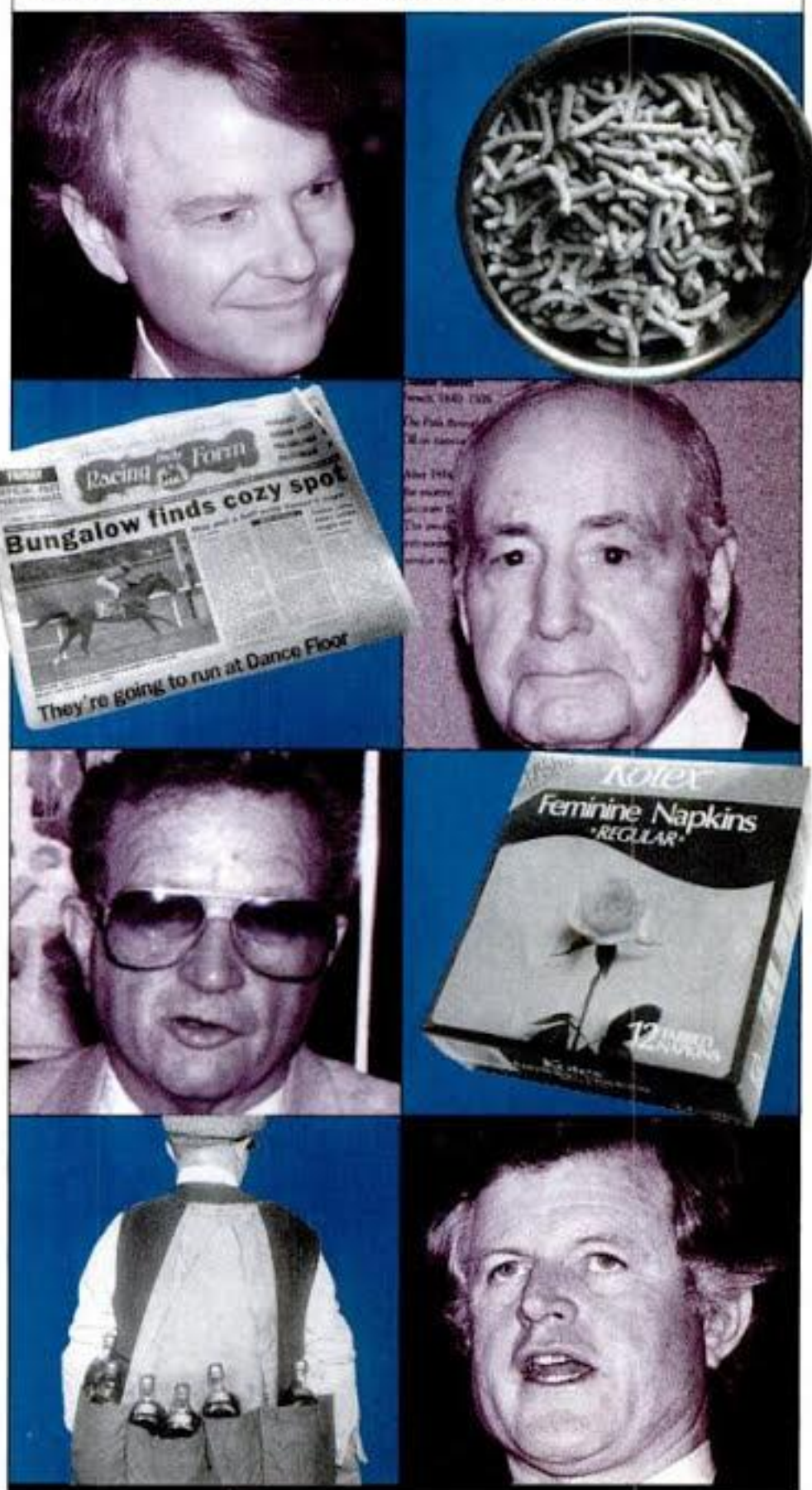
The institutions that the embarrassed rich support usually describe their benefactors...*diplomatically*. When the Miami Philharmonic Orchestra was struggling, a businessman named Maurice Gusman spent almost \$4 million to get the symphony out of debt and buy and refurbish the crumbling theater that became its permanent home. The building was rechristened the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts in his honor. Asked today who Gusman was, the center issues a biography of Gusman that recounts the man's sterling rise from impoverished Russian immigrant to wealthy patron. The key triumph, the biography notes, came after Gusman "moved to Akron, Ohio. Displaying typical ingenuity and persistence, he eventually built a successful business, which by the end of World War II he was able to sell for \$10 million." Gusman, in fact, owned the largest condom factory in the country when the war broke out. ("Akron" is the tip-off.) If you ask the University of Chicago about Joseph Regenstein, the man after whom the school named a library some years ago, you will learn that he was "an industrialist...lifelong resident of the city...interested in research, and himself responsible for many innovations in the paper, plastic and chemical fields." Regenstein's signal achievement, as owner of the Transo Envelope Co., was creating the plastic-window envelope. It's all there on the release—"paper," "plastic," "chemical"—only in highfalutin-tycoon doublespeak.

SOMETIMES an enormous effort is made to buff the family escutcheon. For example, John Y. Brown, the chairman of Kentucky Fried Chicken in the 1970s, asked himself one day, "Is this all you're put on earth for? To be a chicken man?" Following his existential epiphany, Brown resigned, became a hamburger-and-hot-dog man and then served as governor of Kentucky.

No one has had a larger fortune, faced a bigger challenge sanitizing it and gone to greater lengths to do so than Walter Annenberg—not even Michael Corleone. Annenberg is worth \$1.6 billion, but

the defining moment in the life of the founder of *TV Guide* seems to have been the imprisonment of his father, Moe Annenberg, on income-tax-evasion charges in 1940, and the consequent revelations about Moe's rise to wealth. As testimony to Moe's character, Charles "Lucky" Luciano once said of him, "I always thought of Annenberg as my kind of guy." Moe was, simply put, a gangster. In the early 1900s, he used guns and thugs to increase circulation for Hearst's Chicago papers. He also owned the General News Bureau. Masked behind its innocuous name, the General News Bureau was the racing wire that had a monopoly on service to the nation's estimated 15,000 bookie joints—a monopoly kept intact through close

NOUVEAUX REACH Grasping at respectability are Sid Bass (with processed offal), Walter Annenberg (with legit descendant of Moe's bookie wire), Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner (with 12 tabbed napkins) and Ted Kennedy (with bootlegger).



association with Al Capone.

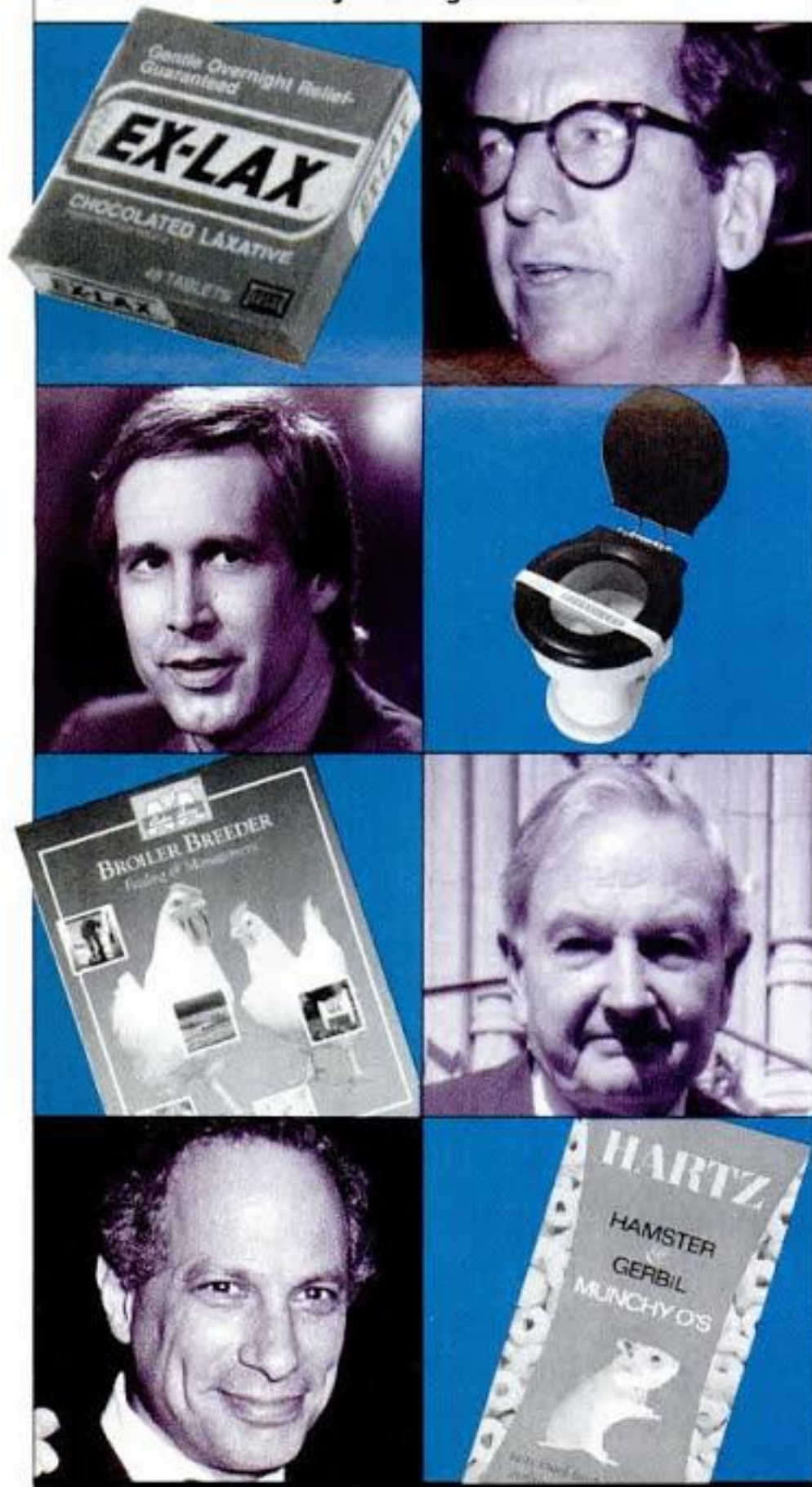
Walter Annenberg has likened his father's disgrace to "being lashed by a whip." Living quietly (by second-generation-gangland-billionaire standards, a 32,000-square-foot Rancho Mirage mansion is quiet), giving generously and mixing in Republican circles all his life, Walter Annenberg was gradually able to help erase some of the stigma of Moe's downfall and raise his family to the desperately coveted heights of power and regard. His reward for his faithfulness to Richard Nixon was the ambassadorship to Great Britain. When he presented his credentials to the queen, Her Majesty asked whether he was living in the embassy, and Annenberg replied, "We are in the embassy

residence, subject of course to some of the discomfiture as a result of the need for elements of refurbishing and rehabilitation." Hey, that's class.

His tenure at the Court of St. James's seems to have been the fulfillment of a quest for Annenberg, for who could be a man of more distinction than an ambassador—except, perhaps, a nobleman? In his heart, Annenberg may believe he is both. Years later, when he and his wife, Lee, took a group of reporters on a tour of their California hacienda, Sunnylands, they pointed out a decree from the queen, posted in the family's "Room of Memories," bestowing an honorary knighthood on Annenberg. Said Lee, with a twinge of regret, "If we were British, we'd be *Sir Walter and Lady Annenberg*." Unfortunately, even if Moe *were* forgotten, and even if the Annenbergs *were* British, the fortune would still be somewhat cheesy—*TV Guide*, *Seventeen* and the *Daily Racing Form* are not quite the same as 250,000 acres in Northumberland granted in 1066. Maybe that's why he sold them to Rupert Murdoch for \$3.2 billion.

Perhaps Ronald Reagan's principal ambassador to England expected the job to do for him what it did for Annenberg: Ambassador Charles Price II, a candy baron, married an heiress, Carol Swanson Price. Her family business: TV dinners.

CASH FLOW Roy Goodman makes money from Ex-Lax, Chevy Chase makes money from a product synergistic with Ex-Lax, David Rockefeller makes money from broiler breeders, and Leonard Stern makes money from gerbil food.



YOU JUST CAN'T PLEASE some people: When the embarrassed rich aren't embarrassed because of the way their families made their money, they're embarrassed because they're rich at all! A friend of Jay Rockefeller's remembers joining the West Virginia senator for a day of campaigning in Appalachia. The friend dressed quietly in a navy-blue blazer, tie and chinos. Rockefeller showed up in jeans and an old flannel shirt. As they approached the first stop, Rockefeller leaned over and asked, *Would you mind not standing very close to me? You look too preppy.* (Of course, what really may embarrass Rockefeller is not that he's so rich but that, unbeknownst to the public at large, the Rockefellers are stud-poultry magnificoes; a company they partly own sells breeder chickens and turkeys.)

Another congressman who does his best to downsize his rather grand antecedents is Amory Houghton Jr. of upstate New York. Houghton's official biography depicts him as just another working stiff who, through stick-to-itiveness, reached the top of the corporate heap: "[He] joined the Corning Glass Works as an accountant in 1951. After a series of promotions, Houghton became president of the company in 1961, and chairman of the board in 1964." Houghton's family *owns* Corning Glass. The Capitol Hill newspaper *Roll Call* estimates that he is worth \$420 million—the richest member of Congress and the only member mentioned in the *Forbes* 400. In his first campaign, in 1986, Houghton exhibited a chameleonic ability to transform himself from patrician to prole. He would leave behind an expensive new wool coat while shaking hands with constituents, wearing an old hunting jacket instead. But once that chore was ended, Houghton would board his 31-foot motor home, the *Amobile*, to enjoy the comforts of spirits, cigars and homemade cookies. "Key to me in this campaign was an insistence that I get the best," Houghton explained to *The Wall Street Journal*. "I've always done that. If you're going to go first-class, do it right."

Some might call this hypocrisy. There are scions of wealthy families who reject their wealth in deeds and not just as a pretense—and who are undoubtedly much less happy than Amory Houghton. John Robbins, for example, left behind the ice-cream-cone-shaped swimming pool, the industrial-size ice-cream freezer and the presidency of Baskin-Robbins to preach the nutritional—and

political—gospel of true vegetarianism. Sickly as a teenager, Robbins decided around 1980 that he wanted to accomplish something more in his life than “inventing a 32nd flavor.” He cut his ties to the family money and lived for several years in a cabin on an island off Nova Scotia for around \$600 a year. “My father,” Robbins says, “believed I was very intelligent, very sincere and very crazy.”

A sense of purpose, social responsibility and morality gives the upper class its reason for being, and for some heirs, the ethical lessons of a childhood can grow from fluffy chicks into fierce gamecocks of guilt in the adult mind. As a boy, Adam Hochschild, heir to a huge fortune from the Amax Inc. mining company, used to crouch on the floor of his family limousine as it passed his classmates on the way to school. At that time, having a lot of money was embarrassing simply because it set him apart from most of his peers. As a young adult in the early 1960s, however, Hochschild toured Amax facilities in what was then Northern Rhodesia and saw hundreds of laborers struggling deep in the hot and filthy mines for their pay of a few shillings a day. He realized that this was how his family had attained the limousine, the Adirondacks retreat and the Social Register listing. Becoming a full-bore leftist, Hochschild cofounded the magazine *Mother Jones*, which he has helped keep afloat since its inception in 1974 with Amax money. The revolution has not occurred as yet, but then, there are some things money just can't buy.

THROUGH IT ALL, some people and corporations never outgrow a sense of pride in their success, regardless of their origins. They are unembarrassed by their embarrassing fortunes. W. R. Grace & Co., the chemicals multinational, isn't shy about admitting the lowly foundation upon which the conglomerate was built: bird droppings. William Russell Grace, the company history notes, opened for business in Peru in 1854 when he “chartered vessels to haul guano, a natural fertilizer, to San Francisco and carry manufactured goods in return.”

Far from assuming a low profile as lord of a batter-dipped-fish-log fortune, Edward Pizek, the creator of the frozen fish stick and cofounder of Mrs. Paul's Kitchens, set out to rid the world of a further stigmatizing embarrassment, the Polish joke. In the early 1970s, he launched Project: Pole, spending more than half a million dollars on advertising to remind the world of the contributions of eminent Poles like Copernicus, Chopin and Marie Curie. The year Ronco Teleproducts went bust, 1984, founder Ron Popeil—the voice on the Ronco TV ads—made a tour of a Chicago art gallery exhibiting the company's merchandise as examples of “cultural iconography.” After shedding his knee-length mink coat, Popeil lovingly handled goods whose names reverberate with a wistful, kitschy nostalgia: the Veg-O-Matic, the Pocket Fisherman, Mr. Microphone, the Hula Hoe and the In the Shell Egg Scrambler. Shaving a potato to fryable thinness on a Ronco Potato Chip Machine, Popeil couldn't suppress a childlike amazement with the device. “Oh, that's sensational,” he sighed—a poignant moment.

The best cure for an embarrassing fortune is simply time. John Jacob Astor first made money in the fur trade, but that was back in the 1700s, so no one thinks of the Astors as furriers. The Rockefellers and Vanderbilts themselves were once arrivistes. After Donny Jr. founds Trump University, and Donny III gives the Metropolitan Museum a Trump Wing, Donny IV will join the Brook Club in New York, and no one will quite recall that the family fortune came from outer-borough apartments, casinos, a big mouth and a horrible, complicated comb-over. Sadly, the quiet nobility of Ron Popeil, gadget tycoon, will also be forgotten. The most embarrassing fortune is one that no longer exists. ☺

“socialite”
 “collector”
 “philanthropist”
 “venture capitalist”
 “writer”/“artist”/“composer”
 “financier”
 “environmentalist”
 “industrialist”

HOW THE EMBARRASSED RICH HOPE IN THEIR WILDEST DREAMS THE PAPERS WILL DESCRIBE THEM

“reminiscent of Paul Mellon”

SO RICH IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER

LEONARD STERN
 (Gerbil Munchy O's)

FORREST MARS SR.
 (Mars bars)

SAM WALTON
 (discount socks)

RON PERELMAN
 (corporate rapaciousness)

THE SHOPPING-MALL-FORTUNE SOLUTION

AL TAUBMAN
 buy Sotheby's

MELVIN SIMON
 produce movies

JERRY J. MOORE
 transport 40-room eighteenth-century chateau from France to Houston

SECOND-GENERATION-EMBARRASSING-FORTUNE NIGHTMARES

mean trust officer

rejected for MoMA board

rejected for *Whitney* board

pizza-baron father suddenly thinks he should do something for mankind; uses the word *foundation*

being invited for dinner at authentic blue blood's

not being invited for dinner at authentic blue blood's

job in embarrassing family business

job ☺

Tina Queen

HOW HAS TINA BROWN
MANAGED TO WHIP VANITY
FAIR INTO THE WORLD'S MOST
FABULOUS MAGAZINE? SHE IS
SHREWD AND CLEVER AND
RELENTLESS. ALSO, SHE
GROVELS TO THE POWERFUL,
PUBLISHES ENDLESS PUFFERY
ABOUT THE GOLDIE HAWNS
OF THE WORLD AND KEEPS
ACTUAL IDEAS TO A MINIMUM.
BUT HOW LONG WILL IT WORK?

Consider the case of the young writer who responded to his apartment buzzer and found a uniformed chauffeur holding a very large bouquet of cut flowers and a gaily wrapped bottle of Mumm's (nonvintage). Tied to the neck of the bottle was a card saying simply, "Thanks, Tina."

This was considerably more cordial than the last time he had heard from her. After a staff meeting during which he'd innocently mentioned agreeing to be interviewed for a newsmagazine profile of Brown, she had pulled him aside and told him, very seriously indeed, that if he did so, he would never again write for *Vanity Fair*—or, she'd added, for any other Condé Nast publication.

He had gone home, thought about it and decided he couldn't take the chance; he called and canceled the interview. Two hours later, the flowers and bubbly arrived. He's still not sure how she knew.

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF MCCORD



SINCE REVIVING THE MAGAZINE, NEWHOUSE HAS LOST MORE THAN \$75 MILLION ON VANITY FAIR

TINA BROWN LIKES knowing things. Curiosity is her Fairy Godmother. Together with a tabloid editor's sense of story (that's a compliment) and a total commitment to making her magazine part of the century's intellectual and social furniture, it has transformed her, in just a few years, from an insecure and somewhat dowdy British interloper into one of New York's most visible salon keepers—and one of the most famous female journalists of her time.

Equally willing to threaten and to grovel in pursuit of her grail, Brown has triumphed by sheer force of personality. "If you don't like my identity, you won't like the magazine," she told a reporter soon after arriving in New York from London, where she had transformed the tired *Tatler* from a dull society rag into a lively and modestly irreverent mix of glamour and mischief. On one level, she was accurate: Ad campaigns for *Vanity Fair* have featured Brown and her more attractive staff members laughing at one another's luncheon bons mots, and the names decorating its table of contents have corresponded rather closely to the faces gathered at Brown's own dinner table.

But the link between personality and product is actually less than it appears, for Brown is both smarter and saucier than her magazine. Though junk-mail solicitations for *Vanity Fair* sell "satire" and "wit," the glittering promise of the magazine turns its readers into Charlie Browns month after month. With the same sort of trust he brings to kicking a football, they rip off the shrink wrap, tear into the promised bonbons, but find that the most salaciously promising stories are glossy love pats, sly only around the edges that don't really matter. Playing the role of Lucy—promising that *this time* it will be different and then snatching the ball away while poor

Charlie upends himself kicking at empty air—is Tina Brown.

One would think that consistently delivering less than she promises would wear thin after a while, but like Lucy, Tina is very good at it. There was the charade she pulled off last summer, speaking at a meeting of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. That the 38-year-old editor of an upscale supermarket celebrity magazine should be invited to tell Punch Sulzberger how to run his business was a trifle odd, but Brown's public utterances were entirely on the side of the angels: Newspapers were losing readership, she argued, because they were bland and gutless. "It takes much courage to risk mugging at a local dinner party or canceled ads because of a report that really hit home," she said. "Magazine editors know that flak of this kind is healthy.... Flak means you're hot. Newspapers have gotten far too quiet, far too bland.... Every so often, you have to bite the hand that reads you."

"Hear, hear," and all that, but really: This is an editor who gave her then friend Gayfryd Steinberg photo approval for the magazine's adoring coverage of the extravagantly tasteless birthday party Steinberg tossed for her greenmailer husband. And an editor who practically canonized one of her firstborn's well-connected godparents, former *Daily News* publisher Jim Hoge, as he was undertaking perhaps the stupidest piece of labor relations in recent New York history. Nothing to trouble the tranquillity of the dinner table here.

The ANPA appearance was, again, Brown using smoke and mirrors to create the illusion of delivering more than she actually did. Thus, though she first told the publishers that one reason their papers were so boring was that "there are not enough women making the decisions," she withdrew the challenge, revealing herself to be a Potemkin feminist: She quickly reassured the publishers that they need not actual-

ly hire women to gain access to "the female sensibility." "The good news is this: Many men have it, too. Some men," in fact, "have more of it than some women." This is known as *licking* the hand that reads you.

An even more bedazzling trick of perception that Brown has pulled off is the widespread impression that *Vanity Fair* is coining money. Actually, since reviving the magazine in 1983, owner Si Newhouse has lost more than \$75 million on the project. Interviewed for this article, Brown said *Vanity Fair* had been "in profit for about a year." Still, it's likely to be many years before the magazine recoups its investments.

But as the porcine glamour that Brown celebrated during the 1980s fades, there are signs that both she and her magazine are treading water: The painfully unironic celebration of the Gulf War that replaced the usually snarky year-end "Hall of Fame" in 1991 was a laughingstock (is *this* the new seriousness?), and a magazine that has traded on the self-bestowed status earned by its sure-footed navigation of the Reaganite verities simply can't afford to be out there waffling and flailing like the 1992-model George Bush.

Inside the magazine (though *not for attribution*; Brown has established a Thermidorean level of terror), people are talking about the editor's incredible shrinking work schedule. "She's been taking off a lot of Fridays and Mondays lately," says one staff member, "and on the days she *is* here, she tends to disappear after lunch." Whether this is boredom, a prelude to the much-rumored move to Hollywood or a commendable commitment to parenthood (her son is six, her daughter nearly two) is mysterious, though an editor who worked with her in London confirms that it reprises her behavior just before she left *Tatler*. Two years ago, she was already saying she was bored editing *Vanity Fair*, and she may be ready to move: Up (possible, when Condé Nast éminence grise Alexan-

Only Connect

Tina Brown, the Early Years—A Memoir by Richard Ingrams

Ever since Max Beerbohm created the character Zuleika Dobson, every generation of Oxford students has liked to single out its own Zuleika—a bewitching female who has all the male undergraduates falling hopelessly in love with her. To the class of 1974 that girl was Tina Brown, the blond, busty, vivacious daughter of a B-movie producer and a Costa del Sol gossip columnist from the posh Thames-side village of Marlow. The only difference when it came to bewitching was that Tina seemed to have a markedly more unsettling effect on the middle-aged men in London than on Oxford's callow young gentlemen.

At St. Anne's College, Tina first fell in with the "Hooray Henrys"—rich, party-going types. In her second year she began to mix with the university's journalists and actors. She was developing a taste for literature, George Eliot and Jane Austen being her favorites. Tina began to nourish literary ambitions. She was going to be a serious writer. But she also wanted to be rich—one Oxford friend goes further and says she was actually afraid of being poor.

Tina became the features editor of the university magazine *Isis*. Her big break came when her boyfriend Stephen Glover (later a founder of London's *Independent*) one day decided to interview the writer Auberon Waugh. Tina greatly admired Waugh, who at that time seemed to write a column in almost every publication in England. She insisted on accompanying Glover to the Waugh home in Somerset. There what you might call an immediate rapport sprang up between the bright-eyed blond and the balding columnist. Waugh invited Tina to lunch at *Private Eye*, and Tina wrote the occasion up for *Isis*, describing with relish the rather seedy upstairs room in a Soho pub where the *Eye*'s lunches are held. The piece, slick and very professional for a student, had all the hallmarks of Brown journalism: It was "in," it dropped the right names, it appeared to be gossipy—but beneath this surface, it was entirely without malice and gave offense to no one. She was promptly taken up by the *Daily Mail*'s gossipist Nigel Dempster, who introduced her to influential—and susceptible—editors all over Fleet Street (including me, then editor of *Private Eye*).

Tina had many young admirers (one was Martin Amis, who immortalized her—at least *some* parts of her—in *Success*), but she seemed to prefer older men. (Even while at Oxford she had a brief affair with the slightly sinister older film director Tony Palmer, and the tiny Cambridge man Dudley Moore has been identified as a key early mentor.) Harold

Evans, whom she met while freelancing for the *Sunday Times*, was 50-ish, but—perhaps more important for her—he was the most successful journalist of the day. He had been editor of the *Sunday Times* since 1967, embarking on investigative crusades and building a team of brilliant young protégés.


As his fame grew, Evans likewise grew dissatisfied with his provincial trappings. His horn-rimmed glasses were replaced by contacts, and he even took to riding around town on a motorcycle. Colleagues were not surprised when Evans grew bored with his wife, Enid, a former headmistress. The distinctly unglamorous Enid could not compete with the bubbly young blond. Evans had by now hired Brown at the *Sunday Times*, where she specialized in what they called participatory journalism.

One piece described how she went to an escort agency and asked for a male escort; another, how she competed in a beauty contest at a lower-middle-class resort. But Harry's favoritism gave rise to resentment, and she took herself off to *Punch* (for whom she wrote a piece about go-go-dancing in a G-string in Hackensack, New Jersey), leaving there in 1979 for the editorship of *Tatler*.

Tatler, like most glossy magazines, was devoted to the famous, the glamorous and the rich—while at the same time making readers feel

ever so slightly superior. In pursuit of this goal, one should cause no offense to the famous, the glamorous and the rich, whose cooperation in the form of photo shoots and interviews is essential to the enterprise.

It is at this balancing act that Brown has always excelled. Perhaps because she herself was so keen to be famous, glamorous and rich, she was careful never to step out of line. Her more wicked, mocking tone was reserved for the unimportant or for those on the way down—girls working at the Playboy Club, or the aging Brigitte Bardot.

Today in England, people still can't quite understand how Brown has become the Queen Bee of the American media world, while Americans may be equally surprised to learn that the rather rumpled-looking figure at her side was once the most dynamic editor in Fleet Street. While no one would deny that theirs has been a long-lasting and happy romance, something of the nature of their relationship can be gleaned from what happened on their wedding day in 1981. After a reception at Ben Bradlee's house in East Hampton, Tina flew straight back to London to get on with the important job of editing *Tatler*, while Harry spent his wedding night at the Algonquin, mulling over the grand old days with the veteran *Sunday Times* man Murray Sayle. 



"IF YOU LISTEN TO WHAT SHE SAYS VERY CAREFULLY, IT'S CLEAR THAT SHE HASN'T READ ANY OF THE BOOKS, OR SEEN HALF THE PLAYS, THAT SHE TALKS ABOUT. SHE CARRIES IT OFF PARTLY BECAUSE AMERICANS ARE STILL CULTURALLY DEFERENTIAL TO THE BRITS AND PARTLY BECAUSE SHE'S SO POWERFUL, NOBODY IS GOING TO CALL HER ON IT."

der Liberman packs up) or Out (Hollywood's beckoning serves her and the magazine well, but it's hard to imagine Brown withstanding the movie-executive hot-seat circuit).

"When she packs five days' worth of arbitrariness into two days, it feels a lot more dictatorial," says one editor. "And because you never know what she's thinking, there's a tendency to pull your punches during editing—so that there's stuff getting in the magazine that could have used more work."

So what we're saying, perhaps, is farewell to the Golden Era. But it's worth lingering over the farewell. For better or worse, *Vanity Fair* became a major influence on American infotainment during its heady fling.

When Brown took over in 1984, *Vanity Fair* was ready to join *Look* on the Big Newsstand in the Sky. Not that it was a bad magazine, but it was a fiscal flatliner—with one of Brown's early issues (July 1984) carrying just 14 pages of ads. A year later, Newhouse had lost patience. In May 1985, when Brown was on the West Coast, she learned that the game was effectively over: "I didn't realize it, but everyone on the staff had sort of tentative reassignments to other magazines, and they were going to break the news after Memorial Day." She went, she says, "into overdrive, calling intercessors," and finally making her arguments directly to the man whose wallet was at risk: "I let him know that there were a lot of things in the pipeline that I thought were going to make a crucial difference. We had Nick Dunne's extraordinary piece about the Von Bülow trial, we had a piece I was doing on the Princess of Wales, we had just done this Reagan cover, which turned out to be very 'news-making.'"

She carried the day. Newhouse agreed to gamble on one more year, and within that year, Brown had turned it around. Her mix of sex, death, money, glamour and intellectual pretensions scored big, and soon

Vanity Fair was pigging at the eighties trough with the rest of *le tout* highly leveraged New York. As circulation and ad pages grew, it became and remains *the* hot book, Madison Avenue's darling.

How did Brown manage it? (I certainly didn't think she could, and said so in a 1985 *Village Voice* column not quite as wrong as DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN.) Her political correspondent Gail Sheehy once told a reporter, "Tina has the courage of her ignorance." The comment implies a great deal about Brown's gifts for (1) surrounding herself with the right people and (2) *using* them.

One of the best ways Brown has found of positioning herself is by attending the right parties—or, better still, *throwing* them. And this she does with some regularity at the large Sutton Place apartment she shares with her husband, Harry Evans (who must be tired of reading that he owes his Newhouse jobs—launching *Condé Nast Traveler* and, since 1990, running Random House—to his wife). There, in an "English" setting designed by Chester Cleaver—a decorator featured in *Vanity Fair* six months after the apartment was finished—Brown and Evans throw dinners for 40 or so guests. (In addition to a salary of around \$300,000, Brown gets a \$25,000 clothing allowance, a car and driver, and an entertainment budget.)

These are, by all accounts, pleasant evenings—where one is more likely to see Snowdon than Cher, and where the guest list outdoes the just-a-little-plonk wine list. Harry and Tina, like all couples, are seated apart at the half dozen tables spread through the living room. He talks a fair bit; she listens, occasionally dropping in a sly comment or a bit of wordplay, but mostly in sponge mode.

"She's very good at listening," says a frequent guest. "And she has an absolutely superb poker face. But I've always found that if you listen carefully to what *she's* saying, it's clear that she really hasn't read 90 percent

of the books, or seen half the plays, that she talks about. She carries it off partly because Americans are still culturally deferential to the Brits and partly because she's so powerful, nobody is going to call her on it."

So she spends a lot of time at parties, something she claims is not unusual: "I think there are two types of editor—the hermetic editor, who stays in his room and reads copy, and the kind who gets his stimulus from observing the scene and coming back and saying, 'Let's report on it.' That's the kind of editor I am."

Further, she suggests, complaints that she is "too social" smack of sexism: "I don't think those questions are ever asked of male editors. I don't see it coming up with Jann Wenner or Clay Felker." Actually, I suggest, Wenner's social life has been giggled over for years, and when pressed to be more specific about her sexism charge, she retreats into a mode that echoes her ANPA speech: "Somebody else mentioned it to me, actually; I hadn't ever thought of it as that, and then somebody told me that was what they felt."

This charge-and-withdraw gavotte notwithstanding, Brown unquestionably is a face-to-face presence. When there's something she wants out of a person, she knows just how to extract it. Here's how one writer, a pretty tough character in his own right, describes a tête-à-tête with Brown in her office:

"I have never *seen* such concentration, such intensity. My first thought, when she took off her sunglasses and just stared at me, was, *Jesus, this is the last thing the mongoose sees.*

"But even before it was over, I realized how amazingly seductive attention that intense can be. She was sitting there, two feet away from me, *gazing*. I felt like the smartest and most important person in the world."

"She plays eight sides at once," says another writer. "When she gets what she wants from you, she stops."

Sometimes the desire to have it all ways—to seem sassy and be be-

"ULLY," SAYS A FREQUENT DINNER GUEST OF 0 PERCENT OF THE BOOKS SHE TALKS ABOUT"

loved—produces impossible contortions. In January's *Vanity Fair*, real estate developer turned pundit Mort Zuckerman (another godparent, this time to her daughter, and a man she regularly disparages in private) was slagged by Gloria Steinem, his ex-girlfriend. After the story was published, Brown, knowing that Zuckerman is more powerful than Steinem, delivered pro-Zuckerman documents that undermined her own story to Liz Smith, who in turn defended Zuckerman in her column.

Not untypical, for Brown—who openly speaks of Steinem's "lying"—makes sure people know she knows how to hold a grudge. A few years ago, she removed certain invitations to the magazine's black-tie fifth-anniversary party from a pile a secretary had prepared by going through old mastheads and ostentatiously cast them into her wastebasket.

With her sunglasses-as-shield carefully maintaining the distance between her and all but a trusted few members of her staff, Brown can be a caring boss; she is said to have put her considerable energy into untangling the health-insurance snarls of employees whose partners have AIDS. She has also been described as a woman who has few real passions, who values expediency above all else. There are lots of midlevel employees whose names she has never bothered to learn, and the warrens they inhabit are so far off her beat that she has been known to lose her way in *Vanity Fair*'s corridors. Once, she went on a rare internal excursion and wound up in *HG*'s ad department, from which she called her secretary and demanded to be led back.

Of course, there are some staff members whose names Brown always remembers, no matter how junior or modestly talented. These are the relatives of famous people, and they (or their Rolodexes) serve Brown well, providing entrée to other famous people whose cooperation the magazine needs. One former editor remembers being passed the résumé of

a 19-year-old, the daughter of a fashion designer, with a note from Tina suggesting she be hired. Under EDUCATION, the résumé listed one year at Katharine Gibbs. EXPERIENCE: "The Antique Boutique—salesgirl; Pasta Pasta—salesgirl, cashier, prepared food and displays."

HERE'S NO DENYING *Vanity Fair*'s substantial impact on the journalism business. Whether or not one likes Gail Sheehy's psychobabble take on politics, her essentially issueless approach—aided, to be sure, by Gary Hart—has elevated the so-

Brown) pointed out, "What we've demonstrated—what *she's* demonstrated—is that long stories don't scare readers off, and every writer and editor in the country ought to be grateful." (Though many readers, eyes glazing over after 7,000 words about, say, Farrah Fawcett, may feel otherwise.) Gratitude from writers should not stop there, for in her eagerness to line up what she regarded as top talent, Brown upped the rates at *all* slick magazines.

But for a less ambiguous measure of Brown's influence, consider some magazine history developed by *The Washington Monthly*: In 1950, fewer than a quarter of *Life* magazine's covers went to Hollywood figures. In

BROWNNOSING Clockwise from top left: the editor as employee, with *VF* owner Si Newhouse; as working mom, with Mort Zuckerman, one of her daughter's many godfathers; as litterateur, with Simon & Schuster's Dick Snyder; as socialite, with Mrs. Mort Janklow



called character question to the top of most newspaper agendas. Much has been made of Brown's willingness to publish extremely long pieces—columns exceed 6,000 words, features run past 12,000. As one *Vanity Fair* editor (who refused to be quoted by name, though he or she said nothing but flattering things about

1961, *Esquire* went 3 for 12; in '71, it offered 1 (Joe Namath); and as recently as 1981, none. In the *Vanity Fair* era, that would be unthinkable (*Esquire* went 9 for 12 last year).


And finally, there's the use Brown has made of photographs. Yes, the Annie Leibovitz approach is becoming a bit of a cliché, and yes, the


Brutes and Flatterers

You Are Tina Brown—An Exciting Game of Social Ups and Downs!


Start at No. 1 and schmooze your way up the ladders to fabulousness. But watch out for those chutes—you could wind up back at the bottom, the punch line of jokes from Fleet Street to Madison Avenue!


START


21  You're the subject of a glittering puff piece!


22  Write a groveling letter to mega-agent Mike Ovitz, begging him for an interview.


23


24  Accidentally publish Gloria Steinem's putdown of ex-boyfriend Mort Zuckerman.


25  Go Hollywood!


20  Ralph Lauren buys 34 pages of ads in 1987.


19  Make up with Zuckerman by arranging for Liz Smith to defend him.

18  Your children have nearly a dozen VIP godparents!


17  Win points with Janklow and gain proximity to his associates, such as Mike Ovitz!

16  Publish hundreds of thousands of saccharine words about assorted Hollywood types.


11  Publish negative review of novel by Sally Quinn, in whose backyard you celebrated your marriage.


12  Ralph Lauren goes on the cover!


13

14  Continue to lose millions of dollars of Si Newhouse's money.

15


10  Attract the notice of the most important male editors in Fleet Street!


9  Flirt with excitable Newsweek reporter.


8  You're the laughingstock of journalism: Ovitz gives interviews to the Times and The New Yorker—but not to you!


7


6

1  Newhouse has had enough; you beg him not to pull the plug.

2  Write an article about your experience go-go-dancing in a G-string.

3  Get uninvited to Ben Bradlee's birthday party.

4  Move to New York; be unfailingly obsequious to every VIP you meet.

5  Hire superagent Mort Janklow's less-than-qualified daughter.

FINISH

BROWN IS MIFFED AT MIKE OVITZ, WHO SHE FEELS USED HER TO RAISE HIS PROFILE

seeds for her *Vanity Fair* portraits were sown in *Rolling Stone*, but their wit and surprise regularly outshine the prose that surrounds them. I asked more than a dozen journalists to name the *Vanity Fair* pieces that really stood out in their memories. Two people mentioned Dominick Dunne's story about the trial of his daughter's murderer (one in praise, one in denigration), one cited Ron Rosenbaum's "Dr. Death" profile, and one mentioned Jim Wolcott's parody of a *Times* Book Review "How I Write" symposium. But everybody cited photos, most notably of the AIDS faces, a leather-clad Claus von Bülow and the famous cover of the Reagans waving goodbye.

That's not very much, really, when you consider the resources the magazine has had at its disposal. And there's no real likelihood that things will change. Partly because of the economy and partly because so many of its huge stable of high-five- and six-figure contract writers are complaining about how little writing they actually get to do for their money, the magazine has become much more staff-written lately, which means that in the absence of freelancers pitching ideas, it's become even more editor-driven. Which further means—given the always operative "Who's hot?" question—more reflective of determined publicists, and of whomever Brown happened to sit next to at dinner last night.

But more seriously, the reason the magazine simply doesn't deliver is that, influential though it may be, *Vanity Fair* is overburdened with the weight of its own corruption.

Not the garden-variety corruption of the sort Brown demonstrated when she caved in to an ad-killing threat from Donald Trump by dropping a story about the doorknobs falling off at Trump Tower, nor even the unctuous praise ladled over major advertisers like Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren in much-discussed cover stories. For the record, a chronicle of these misdemeanors should

also include equally sycophantic treatment of advertisers Bill Blass, Karl Lagerfeld, Giorgio Armani, Kenneth Cole, Gianni Versace, Valentino, and (in the familiar benediction-to-their-children mode) Donna Karan's step-granddaughter and Estée Lauder's son.

This last shaded from misdemeanor toward felony, because Lauder's beamish boy was running for mayor of New York City—a race he lost in embarrassingly thorough fashion not long after Brown's magazine whipped-creamed him as "Our (Fabulous) Man in Vienna." Though there's no defending this stuff, a longtime Brown admirer says the sellouts were in the past: "That was a long time ago, and she really had to do things like that to keep the magazine alive. It was so obvious, really, I don't think it compromised anyone."

As for keeping the magazine alive, the Ralph Lauren cover ran in 1988, by which time *Vanity Fair* was well off the resuscitator. And the fact that Brown is still at it—the major accomplishment of Carré Otis, who bared her buttocks and teeth in a photo feature last December, is her starring role in Calvin Klein's 116-page *Vanity Fair* ad supplement—rather undercuts the necessity defense, especially since the editor had to be dissuaded from running Otis-the-editorial in the same issue with Otis-the-ad-supplement. In fact, Brown sells the editorial pages of her magazine because she believes them—some of them, anyway—to be worthless.

Here, for instance, we have Brown on *60 Minutes* in 1990, talking about her Sylvester Stallone cover: "In some profound way, he's also a joke, and to me it's funny.... There's something deeply camp about Stallone romping on the beach with this bimbo."

To hear Brown, you would imagine she had a Stallone story that was a slyly witty dissection of the myth. But the accompaniment to Helmut Newton's telling photos is instead some dreadfully earnest prose from

the low end of the *Vanity Fair* house stable: "Back home in America, most intelligent people place him on a par with Godzilla [but] here in Europe he's on a par with God. The truth," Kevin Sessums fearlessly opines, "...is somewhere in between." Noted.

Now, Brown is not a fool. Though she may be deluded about her magazine's willingness to offend the people with whom she dines (if I'd heard *one more time* about how Sally Quinn disinvited Brown to a party after being embarrassed by a negative book review—apparently the only evidence of offense taken that Brown's admirers can muster—Tonsant Interviewer was going to frow up), she's perfectly capable of telling the difference between good writing and bad, and for her Stallone story, she deliberately chose bad.

"I remember a meeting about that," says one staff member. "Someone suggested it would be wonderful to turn Jim Wolcott loose on Stallone, and we all got excited about the idea."

But Brown said no. "'What's the sense in wasting Wolcott on Stallone?' she said. 'He's such a bore.'"

"It doesn't really matter what the story says. Stallone is right up Kevin's street, actually"; then she smirked."

This kind of choice is emblematic of the contempt in which Brown holds the subjects who actually sell her magazine—and, in some cases, the writers who write about them.

Still, celebrities are *Vanity Fair*'s bread and butter, and Brown has been a pioneer at pandering to them. Are celebrities promised they won't be asked about certain topics? Sure. Have subjects routinely been given photo approval? Yes, and a number have negotiated for quote—and writer—approval. One contract writer describes being told by the fact checkers while closing a profile that not only had they been instructed to read all of the subject's quotes back to him, but they were also to read relevant quotes from *other* people

ONCE, BROWN WENT ON A RARE INTERVIEW HG'S AD DEPARTMENT, FROM WHICH SHE CALLED

back to the subject for approval.

Another contributor says, "The magazine never, ever put any limits on me, but [publicist] Peggy Siegal made it clear that she was going to see and approve everything I wrote before it appeared. She kept on waving this sheaf of papers around and saying, 'I have a contract,' and there was enough history there that I certainly believed her."

To Brown, such deals seem genuinely not to matter. When SPY published her famous fawning letter to CAA chief Michael Ovitz in August 1990, she was nonchalant. ("Thank God they didn't see the letter we sent the Ceausescus," said one staff member at the time.) The Ovitz letter, though, wasn't simply an explicit promise of powder-puff treatment for him; it was an implicit pledge of supineness for the stars he represents—whom *Vanity Fair* needs to sell its covers on the newsstand.

"Truthfully," says one *Vanity Fair* editor, "no one who controls access to the people we want is going to get rough treatment from us. About five years ago, the balance of power between celebrities and magazines began to change, and we aren't going to challenge that." This poor-helpless-us pose ignores the magazine's central role in *creating* that power shift.

Indeed, rather like Dr. Frankenstein, Brown casts herself as victim: "The fact is, political covers sell half as much. Do I want to have a magazine that's successful, that lets me pay these writers to do what they want? If I did what I would prefer to do—which would perhaps be to have an all-type cover for William Styron's piece on depression—then I'm going to sell..." Her voice fades out as she contemplates the unimaginable, then returns for a brisk tour of the bottom line: "It means that I've got less dough for the things I care about."

Unhappily, what these nebulous *things* might actually be remains unclear. What is clear, however, is that no powerful person is going to get

rapped by Tina Brown—not, at least, until he or she has been dropped from important people's party lists (just ask Donald Trump, Susan Gutfreund and Mrs. James Robinson).

Perhaps inadvertently, in an interview with *Newsweek* in 1990, Brown revealed the reason she never loses sleep over her Mister Softee approach to profiles: Defending a computer-created sky that gave a cover shot of Melanie Griffith a false outdoorsy look, she said, "I would never do it on a journalism piece."

The notion that much of what *Vanity Fair* publishes is not journalism would be, I think, sufficiently unflattering if I proposed it; that Brown is out there peeing in her own punch bowl is astonishing.

THOUGH BROWN HERSELF is said to be not uninterested in ideas, she has created a magazine that is hostile to them. The *Vanity Fair* celebrity profile—whether of an actor or a physicist, a politician or a poet, or what she has called "the magic bimbo who has to appear in every issue"—is almost always strictly limited to *personality*. Though some writers have a considerable amount of freedom, practically every regular contributor I talked to had a story echoing this one: "By and large, the editing at *Vanity Fair* is okay. But the first couple of times, until I learned not to bother trying, they went right to the heart of the piece—the reason *why* this or that person was important—and cut it out. 'Sorry, but Tina doesn't like this. Too boring.' Anything difficult or complex—and especially anything ambiguous—was *gone*." And because Brown's opinion is the only one that counts, her editors are reduced to the role of silent middleman; it is perhaps this lack of strong editing that explains why the *Vanity Fair* work of so many of the magazine's better-known contributors seems markedly

sloppier than their earlier work in other magazines and newspapers.

Thus, even in what could be called the magazine's intellectual strong suit—coverage of mainstream art's leading edge—the stories are more often about subjects' personalities than about their work. Consider a feature last fall on the photographer William Eggleston. The many, many words dealt almost exclusively with Eggleston's colorfully alcohol-fuddled life. And the art direction was even more misdirected: Of seven photos in the layout, only one is a reproduction of one of Eggleston's own works. Odd, given that it's for his photography—rather than for his affair with Viva—that he'll be remembered (though not, alas, by readers of *Vanity Fair*).

But the interesting thing about the Eggleston piece, and about a more obviously swotted-up Brian Friel profile, is that each of these artists—who could (unlike Warren Beatty or Bette Midler) dine unrecognized at any restaurant in Cleveland—is treated as though he were a full-blown celebrity, as though it mattered to countless fans whether he had a rock garden or a perennial border, an open hearth or a wood stove, a fondness for beer or for bourbon. In that sense, even much of *Vanity Fair*'s "serious" journalism is trivial.

The relentless focus on personality has two major journalistic problems. First, the people on whom *Vanity Fair* turns Leibovitz's strobe are likely to be, by conventional measure, "nice." If one doesn't actually discuss what they do, one is left with how pleasant they are at table—thereby reassuring readers that the soon-to-be-sentenced Michael Milken is a down-to-earth, paper-napkin kind of guy: "Not the fine-quality Servaides but the supermarket special, the Colortex hamper-size container."

Second, the avoidance of ideas often turns on itself; in the struggle to avoid "boring" Brown, stories that lack the strong narrative line of true-crime features degenerate into a

AL EXCURSION AND WOUND UP IN HER SECRETARY AND DEMANDED TO BE LED BACK

chain of pointless anecdotes. "I'll find myself starting a piece about, I don't know, Cambodia," says a rival editor, "and I'll be drawn into it immediately by a great anecdote about someone's behavior at a conference. And then there'll be another one, and another one. But about this time, I'm starting to ask myself *why* these people are doing these colorful and corrupt things. You know: *If this is effect, where is cause?* These questions never get answered, or even asked, so at some point I get bored."

From reading *Vanity Fair*, I had always assumed that Brown's was one of those minds that is not interested in ideas but is fascinated by people. In fact, the portrait that emerged in discussions with her friends is of someone who finds people interesting only as means. "You've shaken hands with her," says one English editor, "so you know what that limp, cold hand is like. And you certainly know about the eyes fixed pointedly over your shoulder in search of someone more to her taste—someone who will rescue her from the complete and utter *tedium of you*."

A writer and former boyfriend puts it somewhat more charitably. "She doesn't really *like* going out, you know," he says. "She does it because it's part of her job. But there isn't the slightest doubt in my mind that she'd rather be home reading—and the proof of that is in her conversation. She's not an original mind, perhaps, but she is genuinely interested in the ideas and work of those who *are* original. She's much more curious and a good deal more intelligent than Harry. He seems to me always afraid of getting caught out."

S O HOW DID SHE GET TO be shilling for Michael Milken?

A lot of it has to do with the move to America. Not that she wasn't wheeling along a *very* fast track to success in England, but there were limits on how

far she could go. And it was this class-bound social immobility that freed her to make *Tatler* the truly irreverent publication that *Vanity Fair* only pretends to be. "True," says an Oxford friend, "the London world is pretty small, and she ran the risk of seeing people she might have offended [with *Tatler*], but as the daughter of a midlevel film producer, there were certain tables at which she was *never* going to sit."


Another former colleague suggests that "when she got to the States, it was literally a land of opportunity. She arrived at a time when money bought you fame and fame bought you everything, and she discovered that people *wanted* her at their parties." So, the drive for success being as strong as ever, and social success being more attainable here than in England, she converted herself into a dinner-table ornament and her magazine into a Le Cirque house organ. And though the Pat Buckley phase didn't last long and would ultimately be replaced with a Hollywood fixation, Mortons supplanting Mortimer's, it was her defining American experience.

"She was," recalls a sometime confidante, "*voracious*" in her eagerness to understand America (or at least the Upper East Side of New York and West L.A.). And she was a good student. Over lunches, at dinners, in the lobbies of theaters, she tried to gobble America whole. She didn't make friends—most of her close friends seem to be either English or Americans who knew her in England—but she did make a splash. In short order she moved out of the tacky white-brick white-box apartment building off Second Avenue and replaced her matronly wardrobe (self-conscious about not being taken seriously, she used to dress "old") with flashier getups. And by selling herself, she sold the magazine. (This mode of combining business and pleasure seems to inform every aspect of Brown's life: Her two children have between them nearly a dozen

influential godparents, including Zuckerman, agent Ed Victor, Hoge and Marie Brenner.)

It is, you could argue, not her fault that the America she came to believe in was undergoing a sort of nervous breakdown, not her fault that the people around whom she built her magazine were whirling closer and closer to the cliff. "You have to remember," says a former colleague, "how young she was, how inexperienced. She looked around a party at Gayfryd Steinberg's and said to herself, 'Ah, this is how it is.' And, one imagines, *this is how it will be*."

But now it isn't, quite, and Brown was such a successful and calculating student that she positioned herself and her magazine perfectly for a time that no longer exists. Just as she used to be anxious about anything that might seem remotely "down-market," she is now reportedly terrified that the magazine isn't making the proper transition into the nineties. In addition to the most obvious problem—that a magazine celebrating rich people no longer makes sense—Brown is worrying to colleagues that *Vanity Fair's* signature frivolity is "too gay" and needs to "go straight," prompting her to hire high-testosterone voices like Norman Mailer. The past couple of months have seen digs at old eighties standbys Carlyne Roehm and Henry Kissinger, and Brown is even miffed these days at her old partner in mutual admiration, Michael Ovitz, who she feels used her to raise his public profile. She's certainly smart enough to know that the magazine has to change, even if the life it has created for her will not. Still seen in all the right places, dressed in all the style her clothing allowance can buy, publicized (as of December) by the same woman who does Barbara Walters's personal PR, she is herself a celebrity.

And as such, perhaps, she has become the object of her own contempt. No wonder she has a hard time getting to work these days. 

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Tea for U2

**Franz Schubert's Secret Life,
Bono's Babes and
Liz Taylor's Loves**

by Humphrey Greddon

Now I get it: When *The New York Times* uses the heading "Critic's Notebook" for a column, it is being literal, and the words that follow really have been recorded at three in the morning in a dog-eared spiral binder. Sure, an editor prunes away the confessional verse and the questionings about why there have to be poor people, but that still leaves plenty of self-indulgence. We saw this in the case of music reviewer Bernard Holland a couple of months ago, and now Holland is back with another Critic's Notebook effort that he should have left locked in his diary.

In this latest column, Holland offers what he no doubt considers a delicious send-up of a speech given recently by a trendy academic. The good professor, as Holland might say, believes that Franz Schubert may have been a homosexual and that his music may have reflected this orientation. "Intrigued by Ms. McClary's approach," Holland writes with deadpan delivery, "I have applied her thinking to more modern music, for example, the song 'Tea for Two.' " "Tea for Two!" *What a riot!* Holland continues,

*Picture you upon my knee
Just tea for two and two for tea*

The critical edition (Warner Brothers, 1924) suggests ambiguity.... Who is on what knee?...The weight...of a full-sized man, even in the energetic and devil-may-care era of the 20's, seems doubtful....Perhaps clues are buried in the tea itself. Research shows the composer...Vincent Youmans, favored Irish Breakfast (masculine overtones of strong drink and peat bogs), while the lyricist, Irving Caesar, enjoyed the taste

of orange pekoe (fruited feminine curves and the seductive East). There is no evidence to indicate whether either leaning was amorous or simply collegial.

After we wiped the tears of laughter from our eyes, we were able to read Holland as he went on in this vein for paragraph after paragraph. We hardly paused to notice the lapses of diction—like the inappropriate use of *doubtful* and *collegial* above—or such unintentionally Perelmanesque mix-ups as "In the teeth of joy, Weltschmerz fires its deadly broadside," or that Holland's whimsy reminded us of a hummingbird with wings of lead. Of course, you don't have to be blue-jeans heir Claude Lévi-Strauss to believe there actually is a code beneath the surface of things—you can be Holland's varsity colleague Edward Rothstein, who criticized the very same speech in *his* column, Classical View, but dealt with it matter-of-factly and intelligently.



Illustration by Michael Witte

"Once we accept that the style of even the most abstract composition is related to the personality and culture of its creator," he wrote with un-Hollandisch common sense, "how could homosexuality be unimportant?" Holland is so smug and crashingly unclever that he actually makes you root for PC musicology, a real feat—but then, most anything that's just *too rich* after midnight seems shredder-ready by noon.

Elizabeth Wurtzel's Popular Music columns in *The New Yorker* must pleasantly surprise many of her fans. "Why, this isn't nearly as horrifyingly awful as the stuff Wurtzel wrote for *New York!*" they probably say to themselves. Wurtzel's writing has certainly improved, but she does not deserve credit for the change. Like the \$100 million, multistage smoke scrubbers installed at power plants that burn noxious, cheap, soft, sulfurous coal, the editors at *The New Yorker* work over Wurtzel's prose again and again, removing its pollutants. Even so, the parts-per-billion of toxicity is unacceptable. In a recent column, Wurtzel wrote, "The best U2 songs unfold with a signature rhythm that is sensual and sexual: a strong, steady build-up followed by a powerful, jolting release." Every rock review of every band ever written from the beginning of time contains a sentence about that band's use of tension and release; this mode is U2's "signature"? "On 'Achtung Baby' [U2's latest album]," Wurtzel writes skin-crawlingly, "there are no more high horses—just wild horses; no more running for your life—just running to you." But my favorite of her insights is this one: "Laughter is the universal language not because we all laugh at the same things but because we all laugh, period." Wurtzel perhaps does not remember that we all cry and eat, pe-

riod, too. And anyway, I thought *music* was the universal language.

We would probably be no worse off if Elizabeth Wurtzel reviewed egghead books while George Steiner, *The New Yorker's* resident Mittel European-style intellectual, wrote about Boyz II Men. Steiner's

**George Steiner's
reviews always
sound as if
they had been
translated
from some
more impressive
language
than English**

reviews always sound as if they had been translated from some more impressive language than English, but these hints of Vienna and Budapest often fail to distract us from his essential banality. For example, in a recent review of a book about Simone Weil, Steiner wrote, "Philosophic thought is that which bears on questions rather than answers; where answers arise, they turn out to be new questions." Smooth this out a little bit and you've got

a saying that would be perfect for a refrigerator magnet.

Kevin Sessums wrote the following in a story for *Vanity Fair* about Aileen Getty, a young woman with AIDS who is Jean Paul Getty's granddaughter and Liz Taylor's former daughter-in-law: "'I love Aileen,' Taylor told me. 'I've always loved Aileen. I always will love Aileen. This is her story, but I feel I have to respect and protect the privacy of my grandsons. I will always be here for Aileen...'" and so forth. The point of a *VF* story is to let the writer name-drop, and Liz did tell Sessums this—in a statement faxed to a number of reporters. Sessums commits a much more sickening crime in this story, however, with his coinage of "H.I.V.I.P.'s," "those who, because of their magical media-friendliness, make this most tragic of diseases somehow hip." So that's the explanation for the AIDS epidemic—peer pressure.

Elizabeth Drew, of *The New Yorker*, and Barbara Ehrenreich, writing in *Time*, have broken the code of this year's political discourse. "Though Clinton and others

deny it," Drew wrote, "'middle class' is also in part code for non-black and non-poor." Ehrenreich recently observed that "when those on the political right first test-ran middle class as a conservative poster child, all they really seemed to mean by it was 'normal,' a code for white and not poor." Who would have imagined that when devious politicians used the term *middle class*, what they meant was people who weren't poor!

And finally, our efforts to stamp out the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't opening gambit—especially on the *Times's* Op-Ed page and the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*—have met with pathetic defeat. Here is Jean Strouse in the *Times*:

Across an ocean to the west, the rising sun of a new industrial power is eclipsing the country that has dominated world markets for most of the past hundred years. The newcomer has taken the lead through greater efficiency, attention to quality and detail, quick responses to new technology.... Japan and America at the end of the 20th century? No, America and England toward the end of the 19th.

Here's the *Journal*:

A year after an impressive foreign-policy victory, the president looks like an ineffectual leader, saddled with a weak economy, dropping like a stone in public-opinion polls and suffering from a debilitating ideological challenge within his own party. Jimmy Carter in 1980—or George Bush in 1992?

And here are the editors of *The New Republic*:

The front-runner for the nomination is fatally wounded; a late surge by a challenger, who is still widely regarded as preposterously unqualified for the presidency, makes his fellow partisans even more nervous of impending defeat in November.... But the party for whom such a scenario now beckons is the Republican Party, not the Democratic.

We break this code, and nobody listens. ☺



CREATURE FEATURES Joan Rivers *paid* for her cubism-inspired asymmetrical nose, but stumpy action toy Sylvester Stallone got his kidney-shaped mouth from his scary mother *for free*. Meanwhile, *right*, at celebrity petting zoo Planet Hollywood, Stallone simulates the famous family puss on girlfriend Jennifer Flavin.



PARTY POOP.



SEPARATED AT BIRTH? Overpriced-placenta-cream impresario Georgette Mosbacher's hairdo...and evil mayoral candidate Andrew Stein's wig?

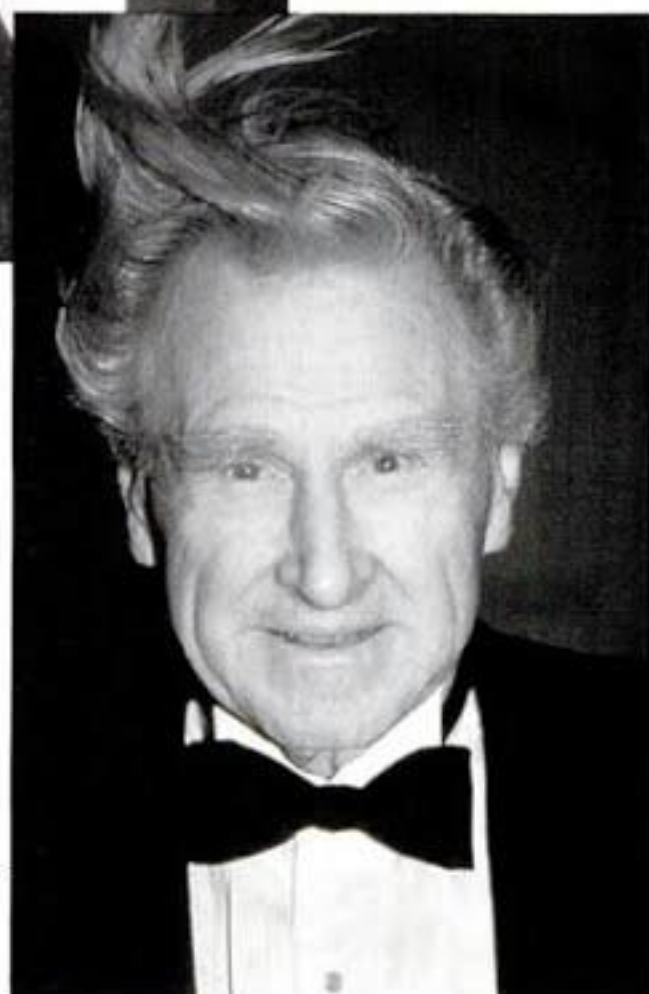
One day not so very long ago at Disneyland, head Mouseketeer Michael Eisner and his head rodent, Mickey, inducted two more make-believe characters constructed primarily of fake fur and artificial padding into the Disney family.



"AND SHE'S BUY-UYING A STA-AIRWAY TO..." Having got all the mileage possible out of the half-naked poolside photo op, Paul Tsongas tries a new strategy: slow-dancing with a Greek American businessman.



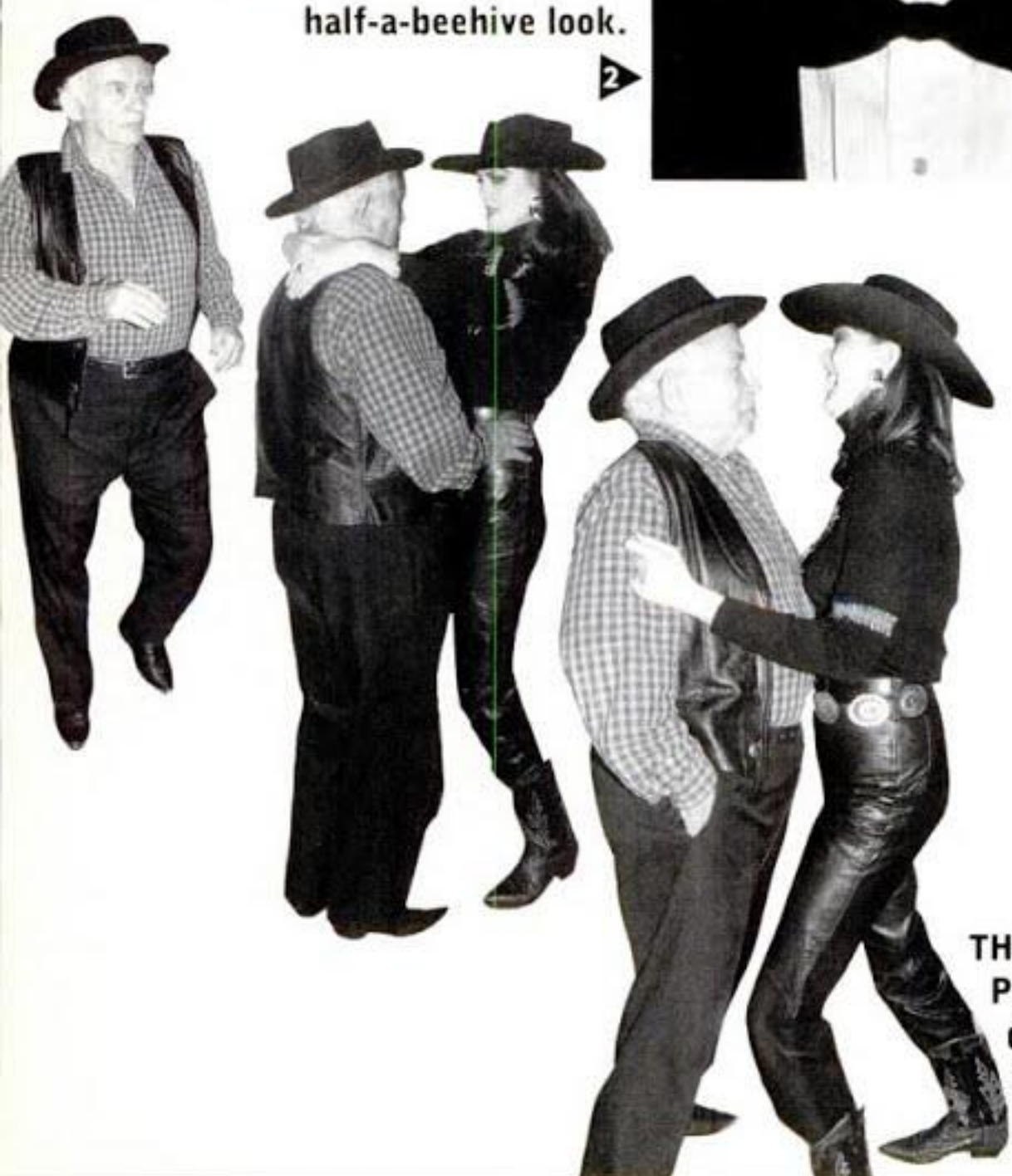
Following a movie premiere at the Ziegfeld Theater, hippest living Spaniard Pedro Almodovar, art brute Julian Schnabel and not conventionally beautiful runway model Anh Duong rush outside to light up, lest anyone see them without cigarettes and think them uncool.



Creative Artists agent and second banana Ronnie Meyer is a popular guy wherever he goes! Witness the warm greeting directed at him by Kirk Douglas at a dinner at the Waldorf.



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THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS TOO MANY PHOTOS OF SERIOUS PEOPLE IN GOOFY WESTERNWEAR After a vigorous bout of do-si-do-ing, hobbit celebrity profiler Norman Mailer takes a mid-dance breather. Standing still, Maypole-style, he forces his substantially leggier and more energetic wife to gallop around him clockwise.

Cracker-Bashing

**Who the Hell You Think
You Looking At, Democrats?
by Roy Blount Jr.**

Your mother has ever been involved in a fistfight at a high school sports event. This is from a Xeroxed sheet I received in the mail. No author given. The title is "You Might Be Considered a Redneck If..."

If, for instance, *your front porch collapses and you kill more than six dogs.* Or *you've ever used lard in bed.* The only thing I know about this paper's provenance is that it was sent to me by a fellow white southerner who works in public television.

A six-pack of beer and watching a bug zapper are quality entertainment.

Do members of other ethnic groups who work in public television circulate this type of material? Circulate it not in outrage but in a spirit of recognition? I doubt it.

Your mother doesn't remove the Marlboro from her lips before telling the state trooper to kiss her ass.

I doubt that any of these characteristics of a so-called redneck fit my correspondent. Surely not *Your family tree doesn't fork.* The only one I would own up to myself is (occasionally) *Your matchbook doubles as a toothpick.*

This doesn't apply to me: *Your wife has ever worn a tube top to a wedding.* Nor does *The neighbors started a petition concerning your Christmas lights.*

But I am happy to share this material with you, because I am not hypersensitive, ethnically.

Your lifetime goal is to own a fireworks stand. I would never write *The New Republic* a letter like a man from Decatur, Alabama, did recently, complaining about a negative review of *Fried Green Tomatoes*. "The barely human Southerner is the last allowed stereotype," he wrote. "When other marginalized groups

gain the power to produce realistic, non-stereotyped accounts of their lives and cultures, the critics applaud, as they should. When Southerners do the same they are accused of trading in a 'milieu...wearing away into cliché.'"

The main color of your car is "primer." The truth is, "marginalized group" is not the kind of language my people have a knack for.

The most common phrase heard at your family reunion is "What the hell are you looking at, shithead?"

But I will say this. When Jimmy Breslin (in *Newsday*) referred to Bill Clinton as "this year's pet cracker," and a few days later Mike McAlary (in the *New York Post*) called Clinton "just another Southern cracker," I found it hard to understand how these watchdogs could fail to realize that referring in such a way to a person outside one's own ethnic group is just as trashy—just, in fact, as provincial—as Clin-

ton's remarking that Cuomo sometimes acts like a you-know-what.

You think Dom Perignon is a Mafia leader. Actually, what Mario Cuomo sometimes acts like is a New York newspaper columnist, only higher-toned. And that is very interesting in a politician.

You had a toothpick in your mouth when your wedding photographs were taken. But I'll say something else. What you seem to want from the Democrats is two candidates: a public-TV one (that is to say, one who is intellectually stimulating—that is to say, Cuomo) and a commercial-TV one (that is to say, one who will appeal to people for whom sitcoms and commercials and Republican candidates are designed). Ideally, this candidate would be bound together in the same person. But you ain't seen that since Bobby Kennedy.

There is a stuffed possum mounted in your house. You may not remember this, or if you do, you may be blocking it out, but there was a moment in history when you thought that person was Jimmy Carter.

You have more than two brothers named Bubba or Junior. Carter was folksy, but smart. He was hailed as a whole new species of politician by

Norman Mailer and Hunter Thompson. You could look it up. It turned out he wasn't a wonder man after all. But a lot of crackers could have told you that.

You think Campho-Phenique is a miracle drug. One reason my people enjoy such jokes is that we have a tradition of not rising too high above the low-down. So do New York newspaper columnists, except when it comes to ethnic groups largely situated outside

of New York.

Your mother keeps a spit cup on the ironing board. Lots of people largely situated outside of New York vote for president.

Less than half the cars you own run. ☷

**What you seem
to want from
the Democrats is
two candidates,
a public-TV
one and a
commercial-TV
one**

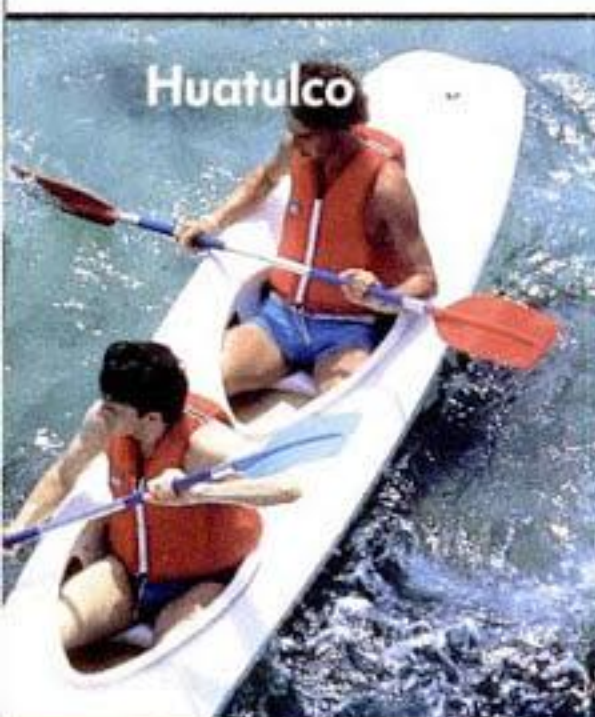
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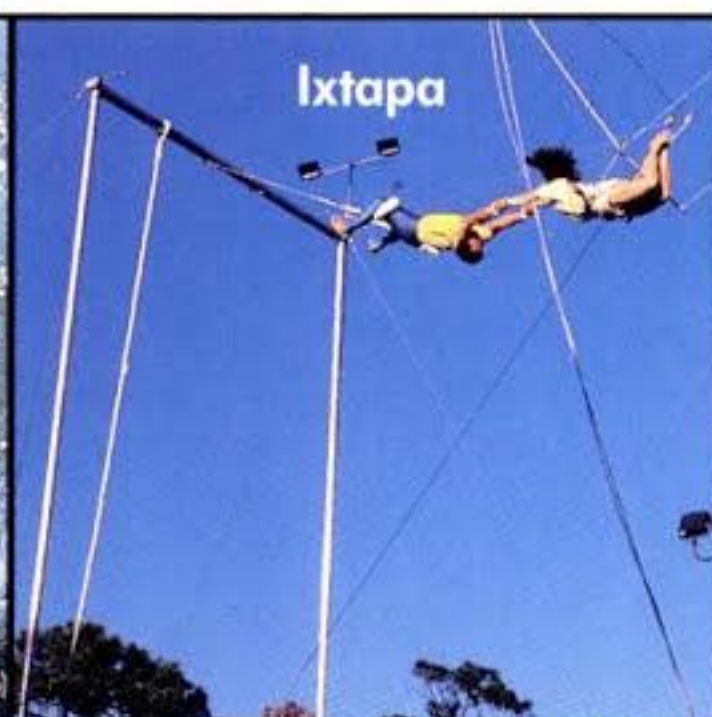
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Club Med
The antidote for civilization.

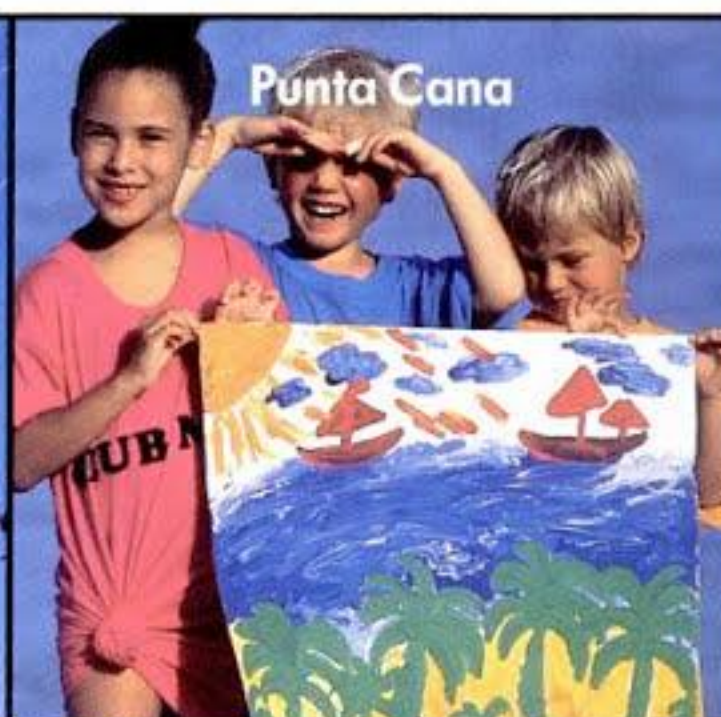
This year, take home a Club Med vacation.



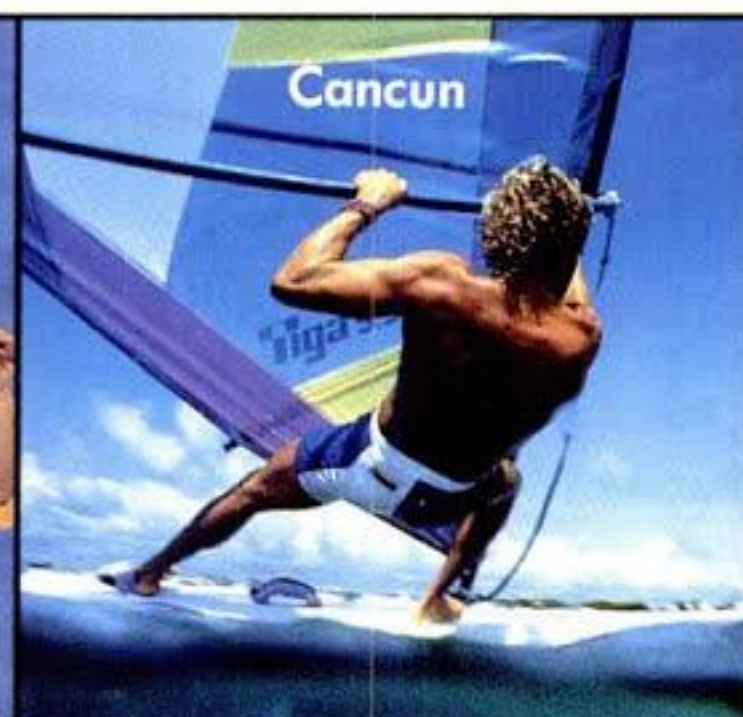
Huatulco



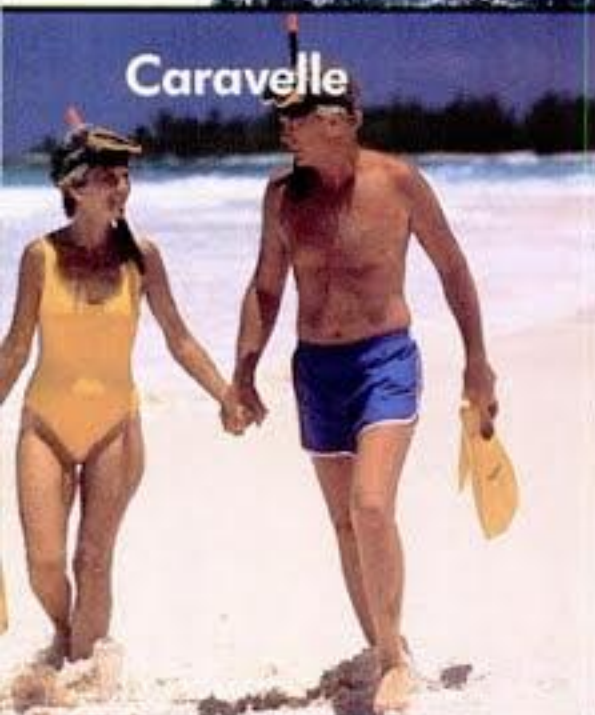
Ixtapa



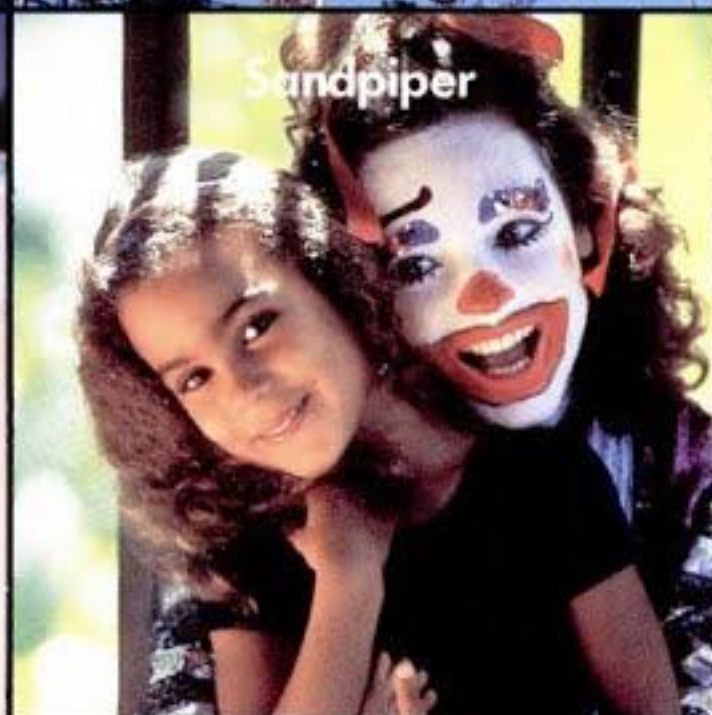
Punta Cana



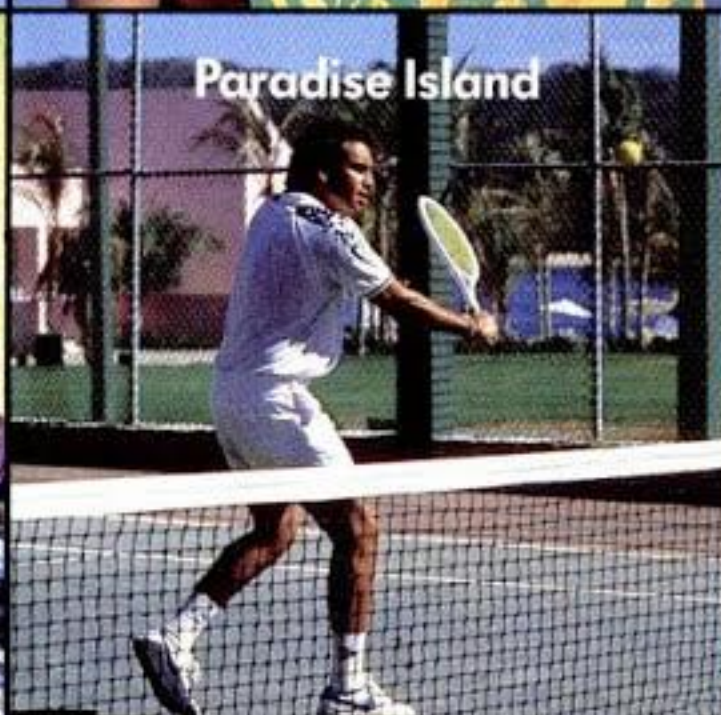
Cancun



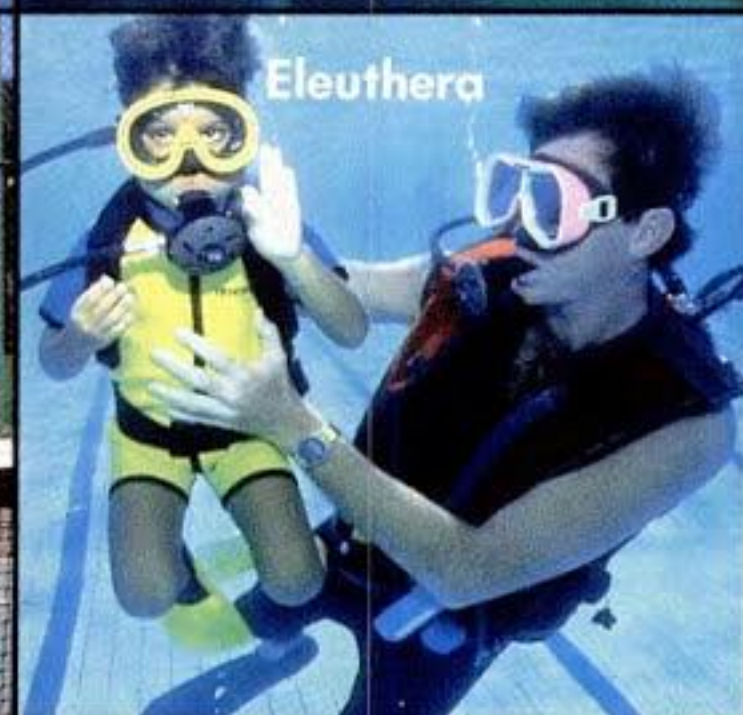
Caravelle



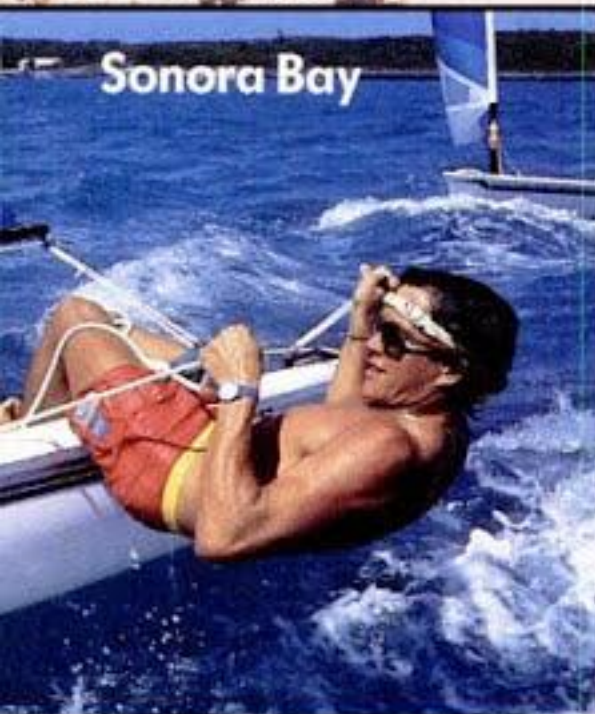
Sandpiper



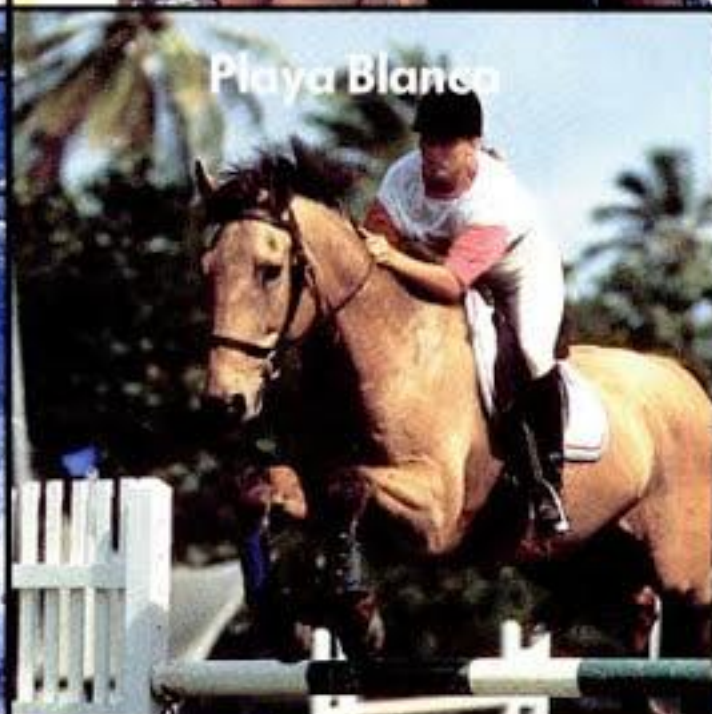
Paradise Island



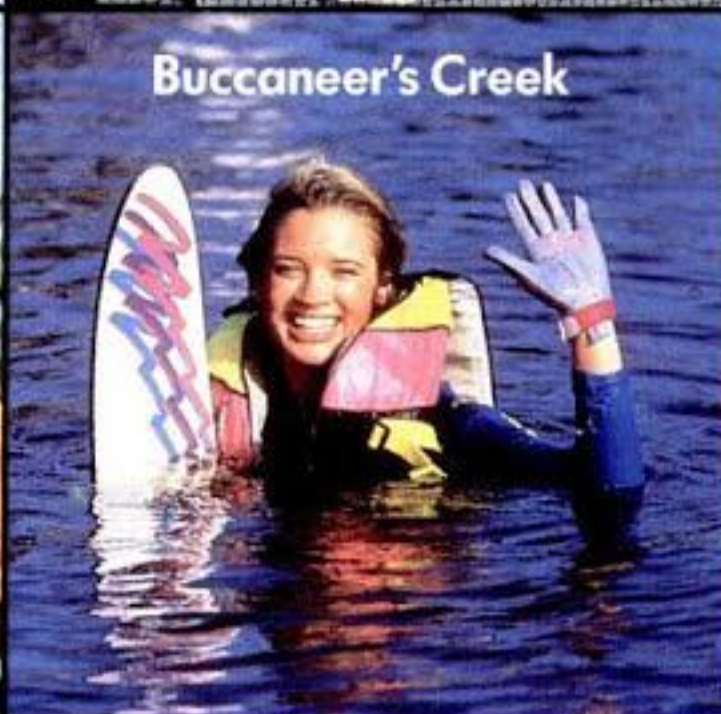
Eleuthera



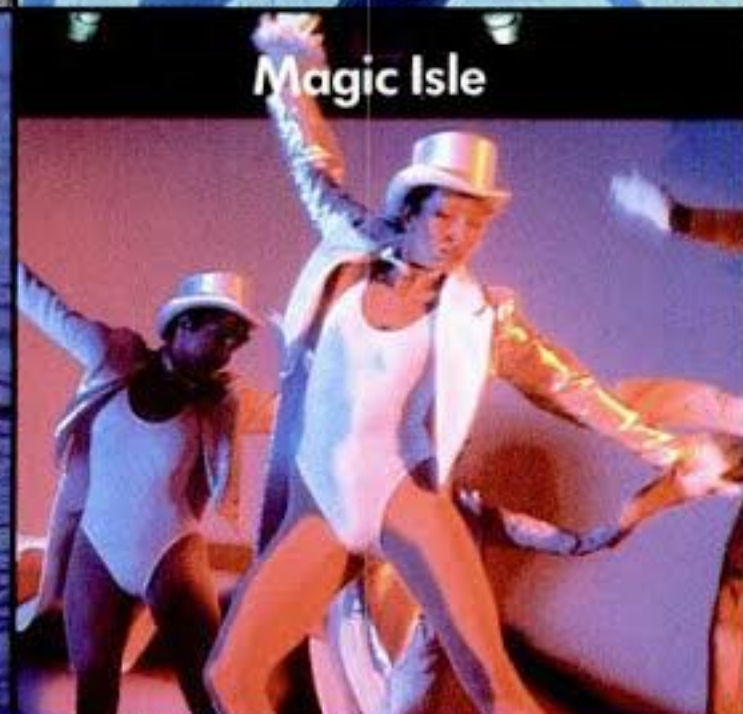
Sonora Bay



Playa Blanca



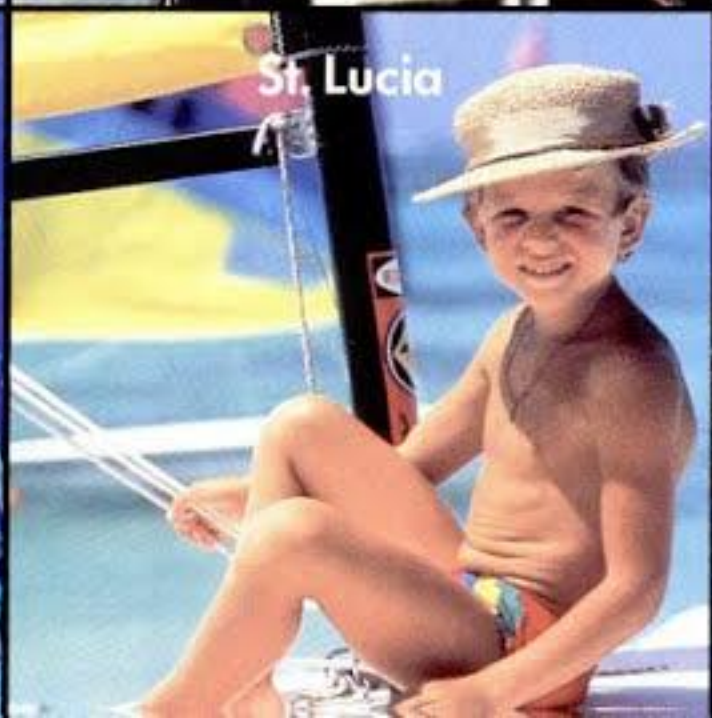
Buccaneer's Creek



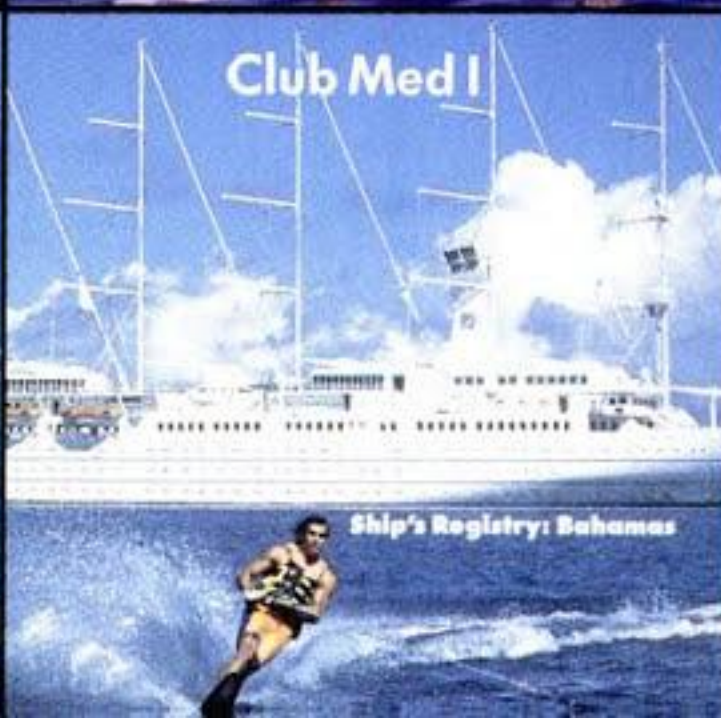
Magic Isle



Turkoise

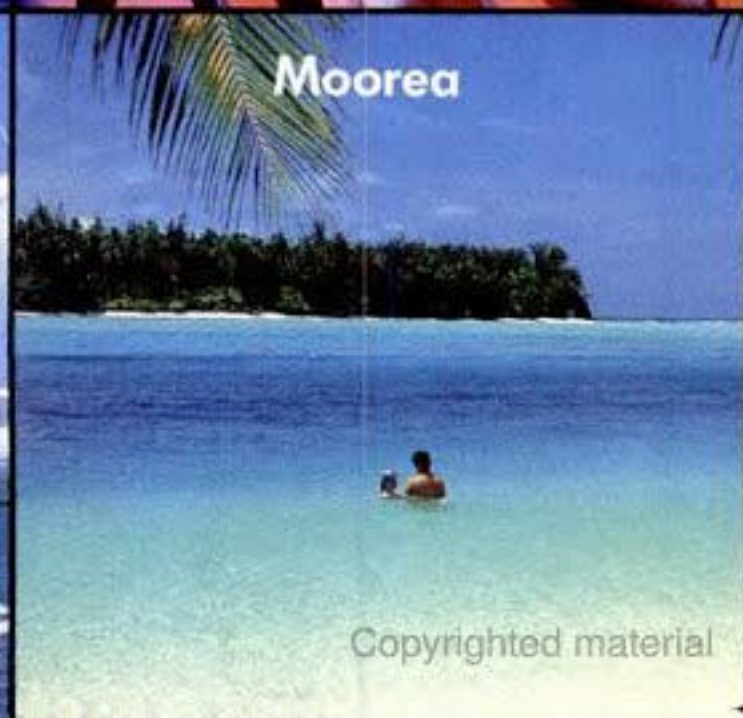


St. Lucia

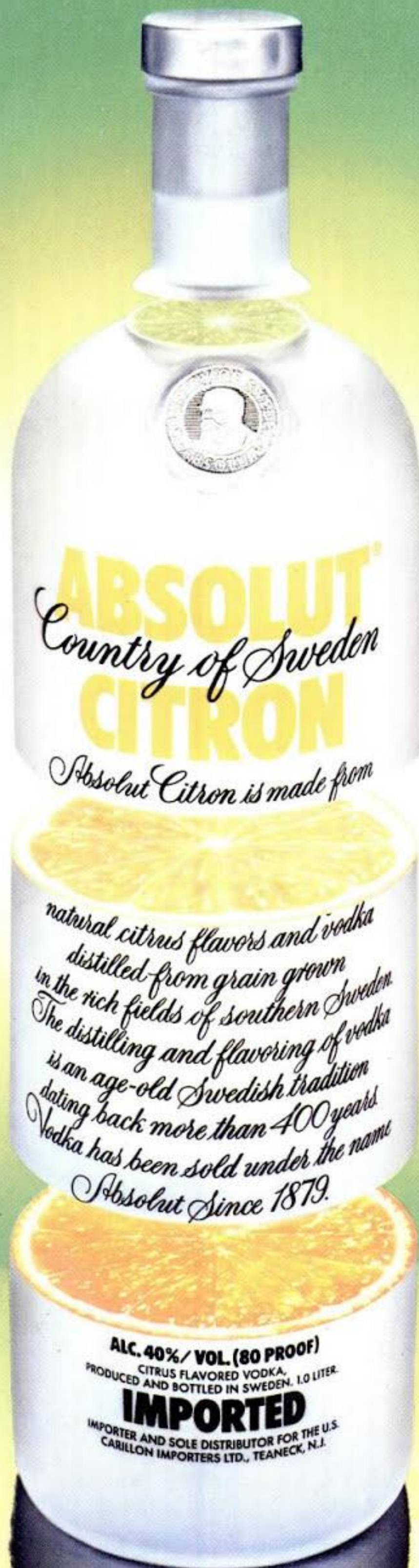


Club Med I

Ship's Registry: Bahamas



Moorea



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